



A L F R E D ;

OR

THE ADVENTURES

OF

A FRENCH GENTLEMAN.

BY

GEORGE W. M. REYNOLDS,

AUTHOR OF "PICKWICK ABROAD," &c.



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BY G. W. M. REYNOLDS,

Author of "Mysteries of London," "Robert Macaire in England," "Pickwick Abroad," &c.

CHAPTER I.

THE EMIGRANTS.

TOWARDS the close of the year 1793, when the horrors of the French Revolution expelled so many noble emigrants from their unhappy country to seek an asylum on the hospitable shores of England, whose sons are ever ready to afford shelter and protection to the political sufferers of other climes, a post-chaise drove up to the door of a hotel in Leicester Square, and a foreigner of commanding aspect, and aristocratic mien, descended the steps of the vehicle, crying involuntarily, "thank God! we are at length safe in the metropolis of England!" He then assisted a lady to alight from the carriage, which she did with difficulty, for in her arms she carried a sleeping babe that had scarcely breathed the air of this world eight or ten months. The landlord received the strangers with obsequious bows, for they were evidently of high rank—if manners and appearance form a criterion to judge of the position of individuals in the wide circle of society—although they merely gave as their names Monsieur and Madame d'Estelle, without any titular appendage. Of one thing, however, they made no secret: too much rejoiced at having escaped the persecutions awaiting them in their own country, the illustrious foreigners did not scruple to confess that they were emigrants from the distracted territory of France, whose ambitious rulers had changed the principles of a glorious revolution into the hateful tyranny of murderous despots. But they had not left their native clime as beggars on the face of the earth: they were aware that many of their unfortunate fellow-countrymen had already put the charitable disposition of the compassionate English to a repeated test; and they had wisely provided themselves with that which now-a-days has become "the one thing needful."

M. d'Estelle, and his affectionate wife, who insisted upon sharing the adversity as well as the prosperity of her husband, resided about a week at the hotel in Leicester Square; whence they removed to a comfortable lodging which they hired in the Haymarket. There

they lived retired and secluded together, while their child—the greatest source of comfort and of hope to them in their present circumstances—throve apace, increasing in stature and in beauty. Often did the tender mother weep over her infant daughter, whose name was Eloise, and deplore the loss of rank and fortune on account of that innocent creature. She did not regret those deficiencies as their effects regarded herself: tranquillity and peace had always suited her quiet disposition much better than the glittering fashion, the ceremonious balls, and the brilliant *salons* of the Faubourg Saint Germain in Paris. But she was ambitious because she was a mother; and her bosom heaved with frequent sighs as she glanced around her present lodgings, for she could not help forming a comparison between them and the magnificent hotel she had inhabited in the metropolis of her native France. Alas! little did she deem, as thus her mind deplored the decay of grandeur and aristocracy, that the trophies of the future glories of her country were to be erected on the basis which appeared to her prejudiced imagination nought but irredeemable ruins!

A year passed away in the peaceful retreat of the family of d'Estelle, when a grievous illness threatened to rob the noble exile of his virtuous spouse. Madame d'Estelle was naturally of a weak constitution; and the misfortunes of her family had preyed upon a too sensitive mind to such a degree, that at length the body was affected. Day and night did the heart-broken husband attend at the sick bed of her who had shared all his adversities with heroic fortitude; but vainly did he endeavour to blind himself to the certainty of soon sustaining a terrible loss. Every hour appeared to add to the malignity of the slow fever which was consuming the unhappy lady; and bitter—burning tears, were those that the emigrant shed when his beloved wife snatched a momentary repose.

The medical gentleman, who attended Madame d'Estelle, was a person no less renowned for his talent than for the excellence of his disposition, and the goodness of his heart. His name was Clayton; his family was ancient and respectable; and his reputation, as a professional man, was so firmly established, and on such sound principles, that he enjoyed a practice inferior to that of no surgeon in London. He was united to an amiable woman, whom he tenderly loved; and his marriage had been blessed with a smiling offspring. Two boys claimed his parental care, and engrossed all the time that he could spare from his medical duties. One was about eleven years of age at the period when Mr. Clayton was called in to attend upon Madame d'Estelle; the other was only nine; but both were promising youths, full of vivacity, quickness, and mental energy. William—the elder of the two—was more sedate and studious in his disposition than his brother Henry; the former was the favourite of his father—for all parents are guilty, if such a term be applicable, of these predilections; and the latter was the darling of his mother.

Mrs. Clayton conceived an extraordinary degree of interest in favour of the emigrants, the moment her husband became acquainted with them; and, being naturally of a kind disposition, she called upon Madame d'Estelle, and volunteered her services in the sick room. An acquaintance, that was thus commenced under circumstances peculiarly interesting, though ~~and~~ soon ripened into a firm friendship;

and the two families associated with each other on terms of perfect intimacy. M. d'Estelle had one secret only unrevealed to Mr. Clayton—and that was his real name and rank; but the worthy surgeon never intruded upon the private thoughts of the noble Frenchman, nor even hinted at the cause of his sorrows.

Months passed away, and the health of Madame d'Estelle declined daily. At last her sufferings were brought to a termination: the cankering worm of disease had bitten a vital part; and the hand of death claimed its victim. We will draw a veil over the grief of a bereaved husband—we will not detail the sorrow of his friends—the kind sympathy they offered, nor the consolation it afforded. No pomp, no vain ostentation were displayed at the departed lady's funeral; the mourners were few, but they were sincere; the sighs, that were heaved above her tomb, and the tears which were dropped upon the black coffin, were as free from hypocrisy as the mind of an infant is from corruption.

M. d'Estelle bore his loss with the fortitude of a noble mind, and determined to exert himself in favour of his daughter. He accordingly accepted the kind invitation of Mr. Clayton, and removed to that gentleman's house, in order to give his child an opportunity of receiving an almost maternal attention at the hands of Mrs. Clayton, who soon became as fond of the interesting Eloise as of her own children. Her husband noticed this increasing tenderness, and was rather pleased than annoyed at its progress; for his humane disposition taught him to commiserate the helpless little being whom a father could not rear with the same facility as a mother or one supplying that mother's place. The two boys vied with each other in endeavours to demonstrate their affection for the daughter of the emigrant; and Henry in particular entertained an unfeigned attachment towards the gentle Eloise.

Time rolled onwards—weeks and months passed away; and the mind of d'Estelle gradually became restless. He experienced a secret yearning to revisit the shores of his native country; he knew that if he could only set foot in the French metropolis, he might realize more than half of his once extensive property, the greater portion having been so laid out as to be immediately tangible by him, and available to no one else. He communicated his desires to Mr. Clayton, who at first combatted them with success; but at length a circumstance occurred that fixed the wavering resolutions of the refugee, and rendered him deaf to the friendly remonstrances of the excellent surgeon.

One evening, as M. d'Estelle was returning home from a theatre—the first time he had entered any place of public amusement since the death of his still lamented wife—he was accosted by an individual who respectfully saluted him, and called him by his real name. The noble emigrant could not at first recollect the features of the person that thus addressed him; but a moment's reflection called to his mind the countenance of an old domestic whom he had been obliged to discharge ere he quitted Paris. A long conversation ensued. The servant had only arrived in London a few days before the one on which this encounter took place; and he related in full many of the political changes which had just occurred in France, and of which his late master had only heard imperfect rumours, or had gathered garbled

accounts from the London journals. At length they separated, but not before M. d'Estelle had given his fellow-countryman a *rendez-vous* for the next day.

The noble refugee returned home to the dwelling of his friends; and in the course of the evening, when pressed to reveal the cause of his thoughtfulness, he declared his intention of undertaking a journey to his own native land, and proposed to start in a day or two, adding that the political changes, which had just taken place at Paris, introduced certain particular friends of his own into offices of some eminence. Mr. Clayton saw that d'Estelle's mind was made up; he therefore refrained from using any remonstrance; but when the appointed hour came, he saw the daring Frenchman depart with an anxious heart..

"You have nothing particular to tell me, my friend?" said he, d'Estelle's hand trembling in his own, as they stood on the steps of the door, at which a carriage was waiting.

"Oh! no—nothing—save a thousand thanks for all your kindness," was the reply. "I shall soon return, and then may perhaps have somewhat to unfold. Adieu!"

And the post-chaise was speedily out of sight.

Mr. Clayton felt disappointed. He knew that d'Estelle had much to reveal—he was aware that those revelations must also materially affect his daughter's welfare. But in another moment he consoled himself with the idea that his friend had certainly committed to paper the secrets which he so carefully concealed in his own breast, and which sentiments of false pride prevented him from unfolding even to those who entertained the most lively interest in his fortunes.

D'Estelle departed—and left his infant child to the care of those in whom he could trust, and who did not betray the confidence he placed in them; for had Eloise been the daughter of the worthy people her father had selected as her guardians, she could not have experienced greater kindness, nor have been the object of more sincere attachment. Henry, whose years so much exceeded her's, made the interesting little being his constant playmate, and doted upon her with more than fraternal love.

A fortnight after M. d'Estelle's departure, letters were received by his friends in England to announce his safe arrival in the capital of France, and impart the hopes he entertained of securing the large property which had been the principal cause of his leaving England. He concluded his welcome epistle by desiring Clayton to send him occasional news of his daughter, and to address all letters to him under the name of d'Estelle, *Poste Restant,* Paris*. At the expiration of six weeks another despatch from the father of Eloise contained the welcome intelligence that he had succeeded in obtaining possession of an immense sum of money, and that he should return to England as speedily as possible, the moment certain negotiations of a pacific nature were terminated for him by an influential relative.

Another month elapsed, and a letter, bearing the foreign post-mark, was again put into Clayton's hands. M. d'Estelle informed his friend that he had been grossly deceived by the political relative to whom he had before alluded, that he was obliged to seek a momentary refuge

* Letters so addressed are to be kept till called for.

in a mean abode, but that he hoped to be shortly able to effect his escape from the French metropolis, and once more seek the hospitable shores of England. He concluded by stating that he had already despatched his money to London, so as not to be burdened with a weighty charge on the day of his anticipated flight from a city where continued horrors were being perpetrated around him.

These were the last tidings that ever Mr. Clayton received of the unfortunate d'Estelle. Weeks—months—years rolled away—and still he returned not to the abode where dwelt his daughter and his friends. Horrible suspicions arose in the surgeon's mind; he doubted not that the gallant parent had fallen a victim to his rashness; and as day succeeded day, and no traces of him nor his fate could be discovered, hope was forsaken, and despair usurped its place.

It was now that the generous and noble dispositions of Mr. Clayton and his amiable wife exemplified themselves in a more striking manner than ever. Instead of recollecting or feeling, as many in their situations would have done, that they were encumbered with a child who was not their own, but a stranger's offspring—instead of looking upon the innocent creature in the light of an orphan whom charity obliged them to keep, they treated Eloise with even additional kindness, if possible; and as she grew up, no expense was spared on her education. Beautiful and accomplished, she became as dear to them as their own children; and never—never once did her humane guardians suffer her to experience the slightest embarrassment on account of her dependent situation.

The boyish attachment of Henry to the interesting orphan ripened with years, and increased as they both grew older. At first he looked upon Eloise as a sister—then as a familiar friend—and at last with the downcast eyes and bashful glances of a lover. His parents failed not to notice these gradual and progressive changes; and so far from being vexed at the preference which their younger son manifested in favour of their beautiful ward before the other ladies of his acquaintance, they did all they could to encourage a passion which would ensure a happy lot for Eloise, and put Henry in possession of a wife whose charms and accomplishments rendered her worthy of the highest distinction.

Henry had embraced his father's profession, and bade fair to create for himself a similar reputation. William had entered into a commercial establishment, and was making a rapid fortune by means of happy speculations and unremitting attention to his business, when he was invited to be present at the nuptials of his brother. Eloise was now nineteen years of age. She was beautiful beyond description, possessed a variety of accomplishments, and was sincerely attached to him whose future fortunes were so soon to be linked with her's. At length the auspicious morning dawned—a brilliant cavalcade left the house of Mr. Clayton—and the ceremony was performed at St. James's Church, in Piccadilly, a select number of relatives and friends being alone invited to witness the celebration of the hymeneal rites.

The year 1812 was an eventful one for the family of Clayton. The marriage of Eloise and Henry was the only happy circumstance which marked it; all else was sad and sorrowful. Mr. Clayton, encouraged by the successful speculations of his elder son, embarked a

considerable portion of his property in the same adventurous commercial lottery, and one morning found himself so nearly ruined that the remnants of his once ample fortune scarcely sufficed to cover his engagements and liquidate his debts. The property of William was alike involved in ruin; and, to the astonishment of every merchant or banker upon the Exchange, his house, which was considered as secure as aught in this world can be, stopped its payments. These sudden visitations of calamity so affected the mind of Mrs. Clayton, that she sickened, and, after a short illness, resigned her breath in the arms of a distracted husband. Mr. Clayton did not long survive so severe a loss. Deprived of fortune and the partner of his sorrows as well as of his joys, he felt himself an isolated being in the world, and became reckless of life. His naturally gay disposition relapsed into a brooding melancholy and a continued reverie on unpleasant subjects; and in the autumn of the same year which witnessed the nuptials of Henry and Eloise, and which marked the departure from this world of a virtuous woman, he succumbed to the weight of his misfortunes, and closed his eyes upon the sorrows of earth for ever.

On his death-bed he related to Eloise all that he knew relative to her parents; he imparted his suspicions concerning her father's fate to the afflicted girl, and placed in her hands the various letters he had received from him when he was at Paris.

"By their aid," said the dying man, "you may one day discover some traces that will solve this mystery, and help to put you in possession of a fortune which evidently was remitted to London and destined for you. When I found that your lamented father did not return, as he promised, and as he repeatedly expressed his intention of shortly doing in his letters, I advertised in the daily journals to request that any banker, agent, or merchant, who might have received money to the account of a M. d'Estelle, would take the trouble of enclosing me his address, that I might communicate with him on an important matter relative to the said M. d'Estelle. But no answer was returned to these solicitations; and every other step that I took to discover your father's fate, and that of his immense property, was equally ineffectual. I sent a trusty agent to Paris to make inquiries relative to those interesting circumstances; but unfortunately your father was accustomed to act with so much reserve, even towards his best friend—who was myself—that this measure produced no more effectual results than the various others which I adopted. It was my fond hope," concluded the old man with tears in his eyes, "to have been able to leave you and Henry, at my decease, a comfortable addition to your present means; but, alas! unhappy speculations have robbed me of the wealth which I accumulated by the sweat of my brow. Thank God! you do not want—you are not in poverty, if you be not rich; and you will act kindly to your brother William, should his affairs still continue unprosperous. Farewell, my dear children—may Heaven bless you—farewell!"

And with these words the tender father and excellent friend breathed his last, leaving behind him hearts that felt too deeply not to deplore his irreparable loss.

CHAPTER II.

ELOISE AND ALFRED.

It often happens in this world, that, when Fortune is wearied of tormenting us, she takes a sudden capricious turn, and lavishes her benefits upon our heads with the same profusion in which she lately poured forth the phials of her wrathful spite. At least such was the case with the family of the Claytons. In the year 1813 Eloise presented her husband with a pledge of their mutual affection; and although the summit of his ambition was to become the father of a blooming boy, he nevertheless hailed the birth of a daughter with the most unfeigned delight. A trivial dispute arose as to the name of the innocent being; but it terminated in favour of the mother, and the child was accordingly christened Eloise.

But this was not the only circumstance which filled the hearts of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Clayton with joy. William had collected the wrecks of his ruined fortunes, and, aided by a little additional pecuniary assistance from his brother, had commenced business once more. For a moment his credit was limited, and his operations necessarily circumscribed, on account of the impression his late failure had made upon the minds of commercial men; but the known integrity of his character, and the rapid successes he again experienced, speedily wiped away all disagreeable reminiscences, and insured him public esteem and confidence to as great an extent as ever. But his mind had undergone a considerable change. His solitary hours were occasionally embittered with sad reflections; he remembered it was at his instigation that his father had embarked in the miserable speculations which had deprived him of fortune, and lessened the remnant of his days. He could not banish from his imagination the death-bed of his affectionate mother, broken-hearted at the calamities that visited her husband when it was too late in life to repair the grievous harm. Such were the frequent reproaches he made himself; and although no sting harassed his conscience, still did he bitterly regret the moment in which, emboldened by his own successes, he induced his parents to hazard their fortunes in the same enterprises. To expel these gloomy ideas, he laboured at his desk with increasing ardour, and not only gained back the vast sums he had formerly lost, but a considerable property in addition. Unlike the gambler, who becomes more daring as his fortune appears more prosperous, William was contented with the treasures he accumulated, and retired from business in a few years to enjoy the repose he well merited after his severe toils. Never having been tempted to change his bachelor's freedom for the silken chains of matrimony, he took up his abode with his brother and sister-in-law, and devoted himself entirely to their society. He gratefully reconnected the pecuniary assistance they had afforded him immediately after his father's death, when he had first indulged in a hope of re-establishing his fallen fortunes; and now that prosperity had so amply crowned his most sanguine wishes, he generously shared the wealth his labours had acquired with those whom he loved, and who felt a sincere interest in his welfare.

Meantime the little Eloise became the darling of her parents, and gave great promise of inheriting all her mother's beauty, as well as acquiring the same accomplishments. But scarcely had she attained her ninth year, when her father was suddenly cut off in the vigour of manhood and of life. Nothing could exceed the grief of Mrs. Clayton at this event; she for many days resigned herself entirely to the deep sorrow that filled her soul, and obstinately refused to listen to consolation. At length she recollected that there were many duties for her yet to perform in the world, that a daughter demanded a parental care, and that she must live for the child who called her by the endearing appellation of "Mother." Long—long, however, did she cherish the image of her departed husband; years elapsed ere she ceased to weep when his name was mentioned; and never, never could she totally obliterate the relics of woe from her lacerated heart. The wound healed, but the scar remained; and it would not have required a very severe blow to have opened it anew.

Mrs. Clayton now reflected more than ever on the words which her father-in-law had uttered on his death-bed. She felt that hitherto she had been guilty of a partial neglect towards the memory of her sire, in never even having wished to see the glorious land to which he belonged, and which had given birth to heroes whose unrivalled names are eternally recorded on the pages of history. She reproached herself with a culpable indifference towards the country of which her father once was proud, and made up her mind to visit the shores where politeness and refinement existed to so pre-eminent a degree. She communicated her intentions to William, and he instantly resolved upon accompanying her. Their preparations were soon made; their adieux to England cost them but few tears; and ten days had scarcely expired, ere they were settled in Paris.

The change between the two cities—the sombre pomp of London, and the brilliant splendour of the French capital—the gloom of the one, and the gaiety of the other—the dulness of the former, and the endless amusements of the latter—contributed much to dispel the melancholy ideas of the young widow, and to occupy her thoughts. Mr. Clayton had provided himself with letters of introduction to many distinguished families in Paris; and a week had barely elapsed after their arrival, before their drawing-room table was covered with cards of invitation, from the ancient peer in the Faubourg St. Germain, as well as from the rich banker of the Chaussée d'Antin. But they mingled little in the brilliant society whose doors were thus thrown open to receive them: the memory of her deceased husband, and the education of Eloise, prevented Mrs. Clayton from enjoying those pleasures which otherwise would have had charms for a still young and handsome woman; and William was never fond of the tumultuous delights of the assemblies of fashion.

Eloise grew up, in virtue and loveliness, from the interesting child to the amiable girl, and naturally became the pride of her affectionate mother, who was not jealous when she saw her own charms eclipsed by the angelic beauties of her daughter. Eloise was tall and admirably formed, yet with more the figure of a Hebe than a Sylph. Her bust might have furnished the model for the Venus of Medicis, had she and the sculptor lived in the same age. The mildness of her dark blue

eyes betokened an innocence of soul that alone belongs to virgin modesty ; and when those beauteous orbs were irradiated with the enthusiasm which music creates in the mind of its votaries, or by a momentary anger—

“ for e'en in the tranquildest climes
Soft breezes will ruffle the blossoms sometimes—

still were their glances replete with chastity and bashfulness struggling against feeling. Her hair was black ; and she usually wore it in luxuriant ringlets, which partially concealed a face where the vermilion of youth and health was so exquisitely blended with the pale white, that the shade of the one seemed lost in the other as objects that diminish and gradually disappear in distance. Her brow—on which no anxiety yet sate, and which had never blushed for aught approaching the slightest dereliction from moral rectitude—was fair and high ; and above it were parted the dark locks that fell in profusion on a white neck, thus forming an agreeable contrast. Her nose was perfectly straight ; her mouth was small ; but the lips were pouting and red—and when a smile played upon them, they revealed a set of teeth that might have brought the whitest ivory to shame. And on her countenance was an expression of such sweet simplicity, that no libertine, however emboldened by his successes in amatory warfare, could have ventured to gaze rudely on Eloise : there was that halo of chastity and innocence around her, which made those who beheld her scarcely ever dare to think of love, but to regard her in admiration mingled with respect. She was like the delicate bud that the ravaging hand of the gardener, who has remorselessly gathered common flowers, does not venture to pluck. Frail and weak as woman is, innocence with her was strength—modesty was a protecting shield—the chaste glance of her down-cast eye was a sword to disarm the attacks of the most adventurous. No one, however brutal his disposition, could have injured that fair creature ; but thousands would have been ready and proud to protect her. So unassuming was she in her manners, so amiable in her disposition, and so unsophisticated in her ideas, that the breath of calumny could not reach her, had there been found one malignant tongue to utter a derogatory syllable against her honour. The old, who are generally bitter in their remarks upon youthful beauty, dared not, nor even wished, to couple her name with scandal ; the bare mention of a word calculated to injure her fair fame would have proclaimed itself a lie.

Such was Eloise at the age of sixteen, when a youth, whose name was Alfred de Rosann, became acquainted with the family. At first sight he was struck with her beauty ; her accomplishments and spotless character achieved the rest. In a very short time he was deeply enamoured of Miss Clayton, and he hoped that he was not entirely indifferent to her in whom he had centred his entire affections. The mother and uncle—ever watchful over the welfare and interests of the young maiden—were far from displeased with the attentions which the youth demonstrated towards their fair charge ; as Alfred was to all appearance an eligible suitor for her hand.

Alfred De Rosann was the only son of a rich merchant, who, dying at an advanced age, left him a handsome fortune, with strict injunctions

to carry on the business that had acquired it. This command, which was almost made a condition of his inheritance to the entire property in his father's will, did not suit the tastes nor the ambition of De Rosann. He burned to distinguish himself in the military profession ; he had read with enthusiasm the history of Napoleon and his Marshals ; he dreamt and thought of nothing but battles and sanguinary conflicts. But there was now no field open to the enthusiastic young man ; and a sense of duty moreover compelled him to renounce all ideas of entering into the army. He deplored, while he obeyed the dying mandates of his departed sire, and strove to forget his visionary glories and imagined laurels in the bustle of a counting-house.

For some time he applied himself with diligence to his affairs ; and his business appeared to prosper. But distaste for the drudgery of an office soon made him less attentive ; he allowed himself frequent holidays, entrusted the management of his house into bad hands, and gradually neglected it more and more, till at last the very sight of a ledger made him turn away in unfeigned disgust.

One morning an old friend of the late merchant called upon De Rosann, and solicited his attention for a few moments. The youth listened with respect, and his visitor spoke as follows :—

“ My dear Alfred, it is with pain and affliction that I see the ruinous state of your affairs. There is not a merchant on the Bourse * of a day, who does not shake his head and shrug up his shoulders when the name of your establishment is mentioned. Your endorsement to a bill does not give it the slightest additional value ; your credit is suffering hourly. For God's sake, before it be too late, investigate your affairs ; discharge those idle clerks who neglect your business, and rob you at the same time ; and place some person, in whom you can depend, at the head of your business. Great as is the evil your culpable indifference has already caused, there still remains a remedy ; for it is impossible that in the space of six months your fortune can be irretrievably compromised. You know I do not speak from interested motives ; my friendship for your late revered father alone dictates the sentiments I utter : but to prove to you that I have no ulterior object, I shall now retire, and endeavour to avoid meeting you until I hear that you have followed my advice, when I shall be the first to come forward and congratulate the son of him for whom I entertained the greatest respect.”

With these words the generous old man hastily arose from the chair on which he was seated, and left the room before De Rosann could find a syllable to utter in reply, so deep an impression had the above severe truths made upon his mind. But when he had recalled his scattered ideas, he inwardly thanked the friend who had given him such excellent advice ; and he determined not to lose an instant before he followed it.

In the midst of his ruminations he recollected that a merchant, of the name of La Motte, had a few weeks before made overtures of partnership to him ; and he immediately conceived the idea of requesting this individual, whom he had always heard spoken of as an upright and trust-worthy man, to assist him in the examination of the state

* The Exchange.

of his affairs. "Should the result be satisfactory," said Alfred to himself, "we will then discourse on the possibility of an association together. Our two establishments blended into one, and conducted by La Motte as the managing partner, cannot fail of experiencing a signal success; and in so doing, I shall not only fulfil the wishes of my father, but shall consult my own tastes at the same time. La Motte has the reputation of an honest merchant; he is not rich—but he is persevering—and that is the essential point."

Pleased with his idea, he instantly put the scheme into execution; and M. La Motte acceded to our hero's request, after having started a few obstacles, that were easily overruled. The examination commenced forthwith: La Motte was not a man to neglect an affair which he saw would eventually turn to his own advantage; and he shortly completed a most minute scrutiny into all the books and accounts that had been kept since the demise of De Rosann's father. The result was not very creditable to the individuals who had been left to conduct the affairs while Alfred diverted himself elsewhere. Dreadful mismanagement had considerably involved the credit of the house, and had occasioned immense losses. But as the old man, who offered De Rosann the seasonable advice which was the origin of the present investigation, had prophesied, it was not too late to remedy the evils caused by neglect and indifference. Alfred gave La Motte a *carte blanche* to act as he chose; and the first step which that gentleman took towards ameliorating the condition of the business was to discharge all the old clerks, and put others in their places.

A month was sufficient to demonstrate the efficacy of this step: the new administration worked miracles in favour of De Rosann; the receipts of the house nearly doubled; its connexions were extended; new correspondents transmitted their orders from all quarters; and the credit of the establishment was saved. Alfred did not fail to express his entire satisfaction at these prosperous reforms, and M. La Motte again talked of the mutual advantages to be derived from a partnership, while De Rosann listened with attention. The result of their deliberations was, that in a few days the necessary documents were drawn up, signed, and published in the *Gazette des Tribunaux* and the *Petites Affiches*.*

It was about this time that De Rosann became acquainted with Miss Clayton. The match, as we before said, appeared eligible in every point of view; and when a modest avowal "that the addresses of Alfred were not displeasing to her" was wrung from the blushing Eloise, the consent of the mother and uncle was speedily obtained. De Rosann was now the happiest of human beings: he was the chief partner in a substantial business—had no trouble in directing the affairs of the establishment—drew cheques upon his own cashier whenever he required money—and was engaged to the most beautiful girl that had ever been seen in the fashionable circles of the French metropolis. His friends felicitated him upon his success—the old gentleman, who gave him good advice on a former occasion, applauded him for the readiness he exemplified in following it—and La Motte

* All partnerships, formed in France, must be advertised in these two journals, according to the law.

daily furnished him with favourable reports relative to the prosperity of their commercial enterprises. But all the congratulations of fawning acquaintances—the praises of the good—the success of his speculations—and the flattery of his associates—all these were as nothing in his estimation, when compared with a single smile on the countenance of his Eloise, or one tender glance from her dark blue eyes.

One afternoon, as De Rosann was completing his toilet, having been occupied with letters of importance that had detained him at home the whole morning, he was surprised by a visit from La Motte, who seldom or never left his office before the hour at which he was accustomed to proceed to the Bourse. Alfred received the man of business with his usual cordiality, and requested him to be seated.

“I hope this intrusion does not particularly disturb you, my young friend,” said La Motte, throwing himself into a large easy chair, and wiping the perspiration from his face.

“Oh! no—certainly not,” replied De Rosann, at the same time manifesting a slight degree of impatience, for it was the exact hour at which he invariably paid his respects to Eloise.

“I will not detain you long,” cried M. La Motte, noticing his partner’s embarrassment. “The fact is,” he continued, “I cannot leave the office to-day—there will be little doing at the Bourse—and I wished you to do me a service when you return home this evening.”

“With the greatest pleasure,” answered our hero; “that is, if it be in my power.”

“Oh! ’tis not only in your power, but in the way of business,” answered La Motte with a chuckle. “I must first inform you,” proceeded the merchant in a sort of whisper, although he and De Rosann were alone, “that our worthy correspondents, Delisle, Guerin, and Company, have authorized us to make an immense purchase for them—they are the first house at Marseilles, you recollect—and to accept bills by procuration, as payment. Here is their letter,” added La Motte, fumbling in his pocket: then in a moment he cried, “Ah! I remember—I left it on my desk; but you can see it presently.”

“It is not necessary,” exclaimed De Rosann, whose impatience increased: “you know I do not often interfere in the affairs of the house—and that I have the utmost confidence—as, indeed, I ought to have—in your management.”

“My sole endeavour is to merit your esteem and approbation,” said La Motte, in a modest tone of voice: “but I see you are in a hurry to visit your intended—eh! eh!—and I will not detain you another minute. All I wish is, that you would purchase stamps for bills of exchange to the amount of three hundred thousand francs, as you return home, and that this evening you would devote an hour to assist me in drawing them up.”

“Cannot you send a clerk? I might forget it.”

“See what it is to have a young head!” cried La Motte. “Do you know, my dear friend, that if our clerks had an idea that we purchased stamps to such an amount, they would instantly imagine we were about to issue our own paper, and that our house was in a state of insolvency.”

“Your remark is just—and I will do as you desire me,” said De Rosann, somewhat ashamed at his blindness in not having before

noticed so valid an objection to his proposal. "But perhaps you will dine with me, *tête-à-tête*, this evening, and we can then discuss matters of business more at our ease?"

"I shall have the greatest pleasure," returned La Motte, his countenance displaying a satisfaction at the invitation which he could not repress.

"Adieu, then, till six o'clock," cried De Rosann, putting on his hat and gloves, and making a movement towards the door.

"*Au revoir !*" said La Motte; and they separated for the present, the one to seek his intended bride, and the other to chuckle over a deeply-laid scheme of villany in his counting-house.

De Rosann was always happy in the society of the charming Eloise. Every day developed some new accomplishment,—some fresh trait of amiability on the part of her he loved; and instead of experiencing an insipid sameness in her manners or her conversation, he invariably returned home, after an interview, more delighted than ever at the choice he had made, and more passionately fond of a being whose soul was composed of innocence, chastity, and affection.

On her side, Eloise by no means regretted the day on which she first listened to the ardently pleaded suit of her future husband. His form was graceful—his countenance was handsome—and his manners had that peculiar fascination which characterizes the Frenchman more particularly than the citizen of any other nation. It was not astonishing, then, that the tender pair found pleasure in each other's company, and that they preferred the bliss of one hour's conversation together before all the gay concerts, balls, and amusements in which the gay capital so profusely abounded.

CHAPTER III.

THE BILLS OF EXCHANGE.

AT six o'clock M. La Motte arrived, and dinner was immediately served up. Had Ude himself superintended the culinary arrangements of the repast—had the *Trois Freres Provençaux* in the Palais Royal supplied the wine—and had Chevet arranged the order of the courses, and laid out the dessert, they could not have succeeded better, nor have exemplified more exquisite taste than the domestics of De Rosann on this occasion. La Motte, who was somewhat addicted to gluttony, was in raptures at every consecutive dish; he praised the wines, and not only drank deeply himself, but also forced De Rosann to follow his example by proposing a variety of toasts in imitation of the English fashion. Alfred was flattered by the encomia which La Motte did not fail to lavish upon the beauty and accomplishments of Eloise; and he fancied within himself that his partner had never appeared to such advantage, nor seemed half so agreeable before.

"This champagne is Moët's best," said La Motte, holding up a glass of the sparkling nectar towards the wax-candle that burned on his side of the table: "and 'tis excellent. Such ambrosia alone is worthy of being drank to the health of Eloise Clayton."

"Eloise Clayton's health!" echoed De Rosann; and they both emptied their glasses at the same time.

"You do well, my dear friend," continued La Motte after a brief pause, during which his lips savoured with a peculiar satisfaction the taste of the wine he had just drank, "you do well to think seriously of settling for life in an honourable, comfortable—and, indeed, enviable manner. One becomes wearied of the *petites maitresses* of the Chaussée d'Antin, and of the *grisettes* in the Rue Charlot, or the Boulevard du Temple. The former affect a passion which is nothing more than an evanescent caprice; and the latter ruin their lovers in dinners at the Cadran Bleu, in cachemires, and in tickets for the theatres."

"And they both wind up their follies or their extravagancies by jilting you for the next handsome young man, whose beauty or whose wealth tempts their passions or their avarice," said De Rosann.

"You see those vanities in the same light as myself," rejoined La Motte. "A virtuous woman, capable of inspiring and cherishing the affection of a young man, is as infinitely superior to the libertine mistress as gold is to dross, or diamonds to pebbles."

"That sentiment deserves a bumper," cried De Rosann, invariably applying to himself or to his situation with regard to Eloise, the moral inferences and aphorisms of his companion.

The bumper was accordingly poured out and drank.

"By the bye, did you think of the stamps, Alfred?" enquired La Motte, after a pause; and, without waiting for a reply, he continued, "because we must observe the greatest regularity in our affairs; and the present transaction will not only create a jealousy in two or three rival houses, but will also considerably increase the credit that we already enjoy—"

"And that you established, my dear friend," added De Rosann, with a grateful recollection of the manner in which La Motte had saved and built up the falling fortunes of his establishment, when it so nearly succumbed to neglect and mismanagement.

"I was certain that the union of our respective houses would produce the most advantageous results," exclaimed La Motte, delighted at the disposition in which the conversation and their repeated applications to the bottle, had put the unsuspecting youth. "But, *apropos*—you did not forget the stamps?"

"No—they are in my portfolio," was the answer.

"Because," continued La Motte, "the favourable terms on which we stand with Delisle, Guerin, and Company, must not be changed into coldness by any neglect on our parts. They are our most considerable and important correspondents; and their transactions with us are alone worth a handsome income."

"Their orders have come very opportunely, then," said De Rosann; "for I have many purchases to make in preparation of my approaching marriage; and a little ready money is absolutely necessary, you know, on such occasions."

"Thank God, the cashier is not without ammunition," cried La Motte; "and so long as we do business with such extensive mercantile houses as that of Delisle, we need never fear of being in difficulties."

On the contrary, our affairs are as flourishing as they well can be.—What say you to a glass of champagne in honour of Messieurs Delisle, Guerin, and Company, of Marseilles?”

And this toast was drank with the same enthusiasm as the others.

“For many reasons, my dear Alfred,” said La Motte, determined not to let the conversation languish, as it is only in much talking that we find an excuse for much drinking, “you do well to decide upon matrimony. The head of a vast mercantile establishment should be a married man; the steadiness of a bachelor is likely to be suspected; and there are a great many people who confound moral with commercial irregularities, and think that it is impossible for a gay young fellow to pay much attention to business. You therefore do right, I again repeat, to entertain serious ideas of matrimony.”

“You know that all is nearly settled,” hiccupped De Rosann, whose head began to turn with the effects of the frequent potations he had somewhat too liberally indulged—or been induced to indulge in; for his ordinary habits were sobriety and temperance.

“*Ha ça!* and the wedding-day—is it fixed?” enquired La Motte, attentively observing his companion’s countenance, which was flushed and heated.

“Not yet,” was the reply. “But I begin to think we have had enough wine. Let us retire to the *salon*, and take our coffee; after which we shall be fit for business.”

La Motte could scarcely suppress a smile when he heard De Rosann talking about “his fitness for business;” particularly as the youth could scarcely stand upon his legs, his head being giddy, and the objects that encountered his eyes appearing to whirl round.

Arrived in the drawing-room, coffee was served up on one table, and La Motte desired the domestic to place writing materials upon another. He then told the man that he and his fellow-servants might retire to their respective beds, as himself and their master intended to look over some accounts, and therefore would not require their services any farther that night. The domestic cast an incredulous glance upon De Rosann ere he withdrew, persuaded in his own mind that the two gentlemen intended to celebrate a bacchanalian orgie rather than trouble their heads about figures and bills. “And being ashamed that I should guess what they mean to do,” said he to himself, “they think to blind me with a paltry excuse. To-morrow morning I shall find the pens, ink, and paper untouched.” Thus is it that our servants and dependants are invariably the greatest spies as well as the most severe critics on our actions; and in the hour of misfortune they are unexceptionably our most malignant enemies.

Instead of dispelling the fumes of wine from De Rosann’s brain, the *café noir* only served to increase the fever of his blood; and a glass of *liqueur* achieved that which the wine had begun, and which the coffee considerably assisted. De Rosann was in a complete state of ebriety; but not so far advanced as to be unable to write, although with a trembling and unsteady hand.

The blank stamps were produced, and La Motte made a pretence of filling up the first; but he threw down the pen before he completed a single word, saying, “Ah! De Rosann, your champagne has rendered me unfit for business; and these bills—which ought to be ready by

eight o'clock to-morrow morning! Here is work enough for at least three hours; and I am unable to share in the labour. What is to be done?"

"How capital!" exclaimed De Rosann; "the wine has overtaken you, La Motte, at last—you who boasted at dinner that nothing could affect your brain—you who offered to drink glass for glass with any man for a wager—ha! ha! ha!"

And Alfred, affecting sobriety—a circumstance so common to a person under the influence of liquor—seized the pen, placed the stamps before him, and began writing to his companion's dictation, with a courage that would have deceived an eye-witness as to his real state. La Motte furnished him with a verbal description for the first bill—and then sate by to encourage him in his task. Often and often did De Rosann nod over the paper, and find himself aroused by the voice of his partner, who occasionally supplied him with a glass of lemonade or sugar-and-water to refresh his parched tongue. Two or three times the unsuspicious youth laid down the pen, declaring his inability to proceed, and the need in which he stood of repose; but La Motte encouraged him with such exclamations as, "Why, my dear fellow, you are not beaten yet! Recollect that our punctuality and exactitude in business are at stake; remember that every word you write creates fresh revenues for yourself and your future wife; and do not give up, now that you have done so much."

A drunken man is easily persuaded; and De Rosann continued his labours. Bill after bill was fabricated, each drawn upon Messieurs Delisle, Guerin, and Company, of Marseilles, and accepted by De Rosann for them, according to the procuration which La Motte declared to have received from that firm. The grey dawn of morning found him still at his labours, and La Motte still by his side. At length the task was completed—De Rosann rose from the chair on which he had sate for hours, and hurried to his bed, where a deep sleep soon overtook him. La Motte retired as silently as he was able, and regained his own dwelling with a fiendish satisfaction pictured on his countenance.

There is in Paris a discounter for almost every respective trade or profession. The same money-broker, who negotiates the bills of general merchants, will not look at paper bearing the name of a book-seller or a goldsmith; and he that cashes the acceptances of the latter, does not trouble himself with the affairs of the former. The usurers and bankers only, with very few exceptions, undertake general discounts; thus the grocer, the baker, the printer, the tailor, &c., have each his separate man of business for all bill transactions. But the proprietors of great mercantile establishments do not give themselves the trouble to go or send to the office of the broker; they are waited upon by their discounters every morning at an early hour. It was therefore with the greatest facility that La Motte obtained cash for the bills of exchange fabricated by De Rosann at his instigation; and as he was cautious enough to discount them in separate sums with at least half a dozen agents, the large amount did not excite the slightest suspicion.

At a late hour De Rosann awoke with a sick head-ache. He had but a faint impression of the transactions of the preceding evening;



S. Phillips, fecit.

The Bills of Exchange

he remembered that he had drawn up a quantity of bills, to assist his partner as he had promised during the day, and he rose with the impression that La Motte had written at least the half of them. He did not however experience the slightest uneasiness—not a suspicion entered his mind—he knew that it was common to accept promissory notes by procuration for a correspondent—and he placed implicit reliance on the integrity of La Motte.

On the following morning, while De Rosann was still in bed, having scarcely yet recovered from the debauchery which he sincerely regretted, being, as we before said, of temperate habits, a knock at his bed-room door aroused him from a reverie wherein Eloise was the chief actress, and La Motte entered the chamber.

“I am come,” said that individual, when the usual salutations had passed, “to inform you that pressing business obliges me to undertake a journey to Rotterdam; and that I must start this very day. I have given the head clerk orders to transact the affairs of the house, as if I were there; so you need not trouble yourself about them any more than you usually have done. In a fortnight I shall be here again.”

“Try and keep your promise, my dear friend,” exclaimed De Rosann; “for I shall be anxious during your absence.”

“Calm yourself on that head, Alfred; all will go on well—and it is for the interests of the establishment that I quit Paris.”

“I wish you a prosperous journey; and at your return I hope to be able to name the wedding-day,” said Alfred.

“Nothing will give me greater joy than to witness your nuptials,” returned La Motte. “In the meantime, farewell.”

And with these words the villain departed, leaving his unconscious victim to bear the brunt of all the disasters that might ensue from the nefarious deeds soon to be brought to light.

For some time La Motte had foreseen the certainty of the failure of their establishment; and when the crisis was nearly at hand, but before any one suspected the tottering situation of the firm, he resolved by a bold and desperate stroke to secure to himself a handsome fortune, which it was his intention to enjoy in a foreign land. He therefore turned to his own advantage the credulous and confiding ignorance of De Rosann in commercial matters; and he so arranged his damnable scheme, that had one of the discounters suspected the validity of the bills, or from any circumstance been aware that they were forgeries, he had an excellent excuse at hand;—“It was my partner who drew them up—my partner placed them in my portfolio to be discounted—my partner received the procuration—it is his hand-writing—I am innocent of any foul proceedings in the affair.” Such would have been his apology; but the matter passed off without a comment on the part of the money-brokers; and La Motte’s scheme succeeded to the utmost of his wishes. Had his affairs always continued in a flourishing condition, perhaps he would have remained an honest member of society. Many are driven by circumstances only to commit crime; while others are born with a natural predilection to evil. It is not well for a virtuous man to be too proud of his abstinence from moral delinquency, unless he can reply in the affirmative to the question “Whether he has ever been thrown in the way of temptation, so as to have had an opportunity of resisting it?”

A few days after the departure of La Motte, De Rosann received the following letter, bearing the English post-mark, and dated from Dover:—

“ My dear De Rosann,

“ Now that I am safe and beyond the reach of danger, I feel it my duty to caution you as to the real state of our affairs. The house must stop payment in less than a fortnight; nothing can avert the blow. I am sorry for you—but I did all I could to prevent it. And now, for God’s sake! take my advice, and leave the country. I need scarcely tell you that the bills drawn on Delisle, Guerin, and Company, are forgeries; and that no procuration of their’s ever authorized such a proceeding. Leave, then, before the fraud be detected—and hasten into the Dutch provinces as speedily as you can. My advice is perfectly disinterested, as you must see; I only make you aware of your real situation, as your ignorance of it can benefit me no longer, and as I do not wish to see you involved in difficulties which you may avoid.

“ Ever your’s, sincerely,

“ LA MOTTE.

“ *September 7, 1829.*”

Nothing could exceed the mingled sensations of horror and indignation that filled the breast of De Rosann when he perused this letter.

“ The villain—the reprobate!” he cried, crushing the fatal epistle in his hands: “ and has he thus dared not only to deceive me, but also to involve me in a crime—a treachery, the consequences of which may be terrible in the extreme? *He is sorry for me*—the wretch!—for me whom he has basely—cruelly deceived! Oh! how blind—how short-sighted was I not to suspect some duplicity at the bottom of so much precaution! To make me purchase the stamps—to request my aid in drawing up the bills—to withhold the pretended procuration—and to flatter me with his shallow speeches, his moralizing aphorisms, and his toasts! And this is the man who begs me to recollect *that his advice is perfectly disinterested!* The paltry scoundrel! But the laws of my country are just and merciful—they cannot find me guilty of so heinous a crime: I will throw myself upon my knees before my judge, I will explain all—and this letter will help out my testimony, and speak as evidence in my favour!”

Having thus partly given vent to his indignation in useless invectives against the author of his miseries, he was about to proceed to the Commissary of Police of the quarter of the city in which he resided, and make a full statement of the whole transaction, when a violent knock at the door of his outward apartment made him hesitate a moment ere he put his design into execution. He fondly hoped that the visitor might be Mr. Clayton, to whom he would explain his exact position, and solicit advice. But his wishes were not destined to be gratified in this instance. The clanking of swords, and the heavy tread of boots in the passage, made his blood run cold within him; and when he saw the Gendarmes enter his room, he fell upon the floor, forgetful of his innocence—overcome by the horrors of his situation, and crying, “ Mercy! Mercy!”

But the functionaries of the law had no power to spare nor to condemn; they were merely charged to secure his person, and lead him



J. Phillips, fec.

The Arrest.

before a high authority, whose duty it was to investigate the grounds of the accusation brought against the prisoner, and either commit him to a gaol, or restore him to liberty, according to the importance to be attached to first appearances.

Arrived at the office of the Commissary of Police, the Gendarmes introduced De Rosann to the private cabinet in which the magistrate was seated. A long and painful investigation then commenced. De Rosann endeavoured to recall his scattered ideas; but his replies were frequently so vague and contradictory, his looks so wild, and his countenance so distorted with terror, that ere half the examination was concluded, the Commissary was almost convinced in his own mind that the accused was guilty of the crime—and that crime was Forgery! The unguarded exclamations he had uttered at the moment of his capture, the useless supplications he had made to the Gendarmes to suffer him to proceed alone to the Commissary's office, to trust to his honour, and not to ruin his character by an exposure—all these circumstances appeared sadly to the unfortunate youth's disadvantage; and when coupled with the damning fact that the bills were in his own hand-writing, they seemed to combine an overwhelming evidence against him. He was accordingly consigned to the safe-guard of a prison, while the Commissary forwarded the *proces-verbal*, or indictment, to the Procureur du Roi.

We shall not dwell at any considerable length on this sad portion of our tale: we shall draw a veil over the sorrows of Eloise, and the afflictions which De Rosann was doomed to experience. One thing we must however mention: the moment it was generally rumoured that the unhappy young man was certain to be found guilty and to be condemned to a very severe punishment, Mrs. Clayton deemed it her duty—a severe one, which maternal prudence, and perhaps selfishness, obliged her, she thought, to perform—to forbid Eloise to consider herself as any longer engaged to De Rosann. In vain the heroic girl, with tears in her eyes, threw herself at her mother's feet, and implored a reversion of this sad sentence—in vain did her uncle eloquently plead in behalf of the lovers, and endeavour to impress upon Mrs. Clayton's mind that it was neither humane nor generous to desert the poor youth at a moment when sorrows bowed him down to the earth, and when the rest of the world forsook him—and notwithstanding she believed, nay—was convinced in her own mind, as well as her brother-in-law and her almost heart-broken daughter, that De Rosann was innocent of the dreadful crime laid to his charge, Mrs. Clayton was still firm in her resolves not to suffer Eloise to regard him as her future husband, unless he were fully acquitted in the face of the world by a jury of his countrymen.

The eventful day of the trial dawned; and numerous were the hopes and fears in the minds of the few who were any way interested as to the fate of Alfred de Rosann. The court was crowded to excess; the accused manifested a degree of firmness which astonished those who had heard or read of his agitation and terror on the morning of his arrest; and when his counsel rose to defend him, a pin might have been heard to fall on the oaken floor of the hall, in which the tribunal sate, at the Palais de Justice.

De Rosann's counsel entered at considerable length upon the affairs

of his client. He described the negligence of which the accused had been guilty in conducting his business—the investigation of his circumstances, which took place in compliance with the judicious counsel given by an old friend of his late father's—the partnership between him and La Motte—the notorious indifference which he still manifested towards the details of his commercial speculations—the material fact that the whole business was left to the entire management of La Motte—the ignorance of De Rosann in mercantile matters—his occupations and pursuits so much at variance with them—his perpetual absence from the establishment—and the facility with which a designing villain might have taken him in. The lawyer, amidst a hum of approbation which ceased at a signal from the President, then proceeded to detail De Rosann's version of the affair that had thus brought him before the court—the manner in which La Motte had made use of him as a mere tool—his intoxication on the night when the bills were fabricated—the circumstance of La Motte's having desired a domestic to supply them with writing materials, and to retire for the night, as his services were no longer required—the certainty that La Motte himself negotiated the bills on the following morning, and decamped the day after—and, lastly, the contents of the letter despatched from Dover, which was in La Motte's own hand-writing, and which proved that De Rosann was ignorant of the fraud attached to the transaction, till the receipt of the said letter. The counsel terminated his skilful defence by saying that if the evidence he had recapitulated in favour of his client were not sufficient to procure a verdict of acquittal, he sincerely hoped that the youth and inexperience of the accused might have their weight in his side of the balance which a just judge and jury held in their hands.

A murmur of approbation followed this able defence ; and hope beat high in the breast of De Rosann, when the Procureur du Roi rose to reply.

The public minister said that however negligent in his affairs the accused might have been, he must still have had some acquaintance with the principal transactions of the house—that the investigation into the position of his affairs, which took place according to the wishes of a friend, must have opened his eyes to the ruinous consequences of indifference and inattention to his business—that the partnership between him and La Motte would not have increased that inattention on the part of a young man of De Rosann's known talent and abilities—that De Rosann had often been in La Motte's private office—that it was fair to argue those visits were for the purpose of looking a little into his affairs—that however ignorant the accused might be of mercantile transactions, he knew enough to ascertain whether the books were kept in order, whether the receipts equalled the expenditure, and whether those receipts and expenditures were properly balanced—that no sensible man could conceive the possibility of the head partner in a large house not knowing whether he had a thousand or a hundred thousand francs a year—and that with regard to the continued absence of the accused from his establishment, he, the Procureur du Roi, had already called evidence to prove that De Rosann was seen at least on ten different occasions in the private office of La Motte, the time he spent there being quite sufficient to

put him *au courant* of the principal features of his affairs, supposing—and the supposition was a fair one—that such was the object of those visits. The public minister then entered minutely upon every particular relative to the forgery. He said that the bills were in the hand-writing of the accused—that not one was drawn up by La Motte—that it could not be proved at what time the bills were fabricated, two hours having elapsed between the moment at which the stamps were purchased and the hour of six when De Rosann sate down to dinner with La Motte—that it was reasonable to suppose that the bills were drawn up before dinner—that the trembling hand in which they were written was as likely to be the effect of extreme agitation as of intoxication—that, when the servant took in the coffee and writing materials to the drawing-room, De Rosann was in a state of ebriety which appeared to defy the possibility of his being able to hold a pen, much less to trace a legible line—that it was very natural for La Motte to desire the domestic to retire, it being late, and his master unable to give orders—that La Motte negotiated the bills, because he was a party to the concern—that De Rosann was outwitted by La Motte, who decamped with the proceeds—and that the letter from Dover was the result of La Motte's remaining good feelings towards the accused. The Procureur wound up his oration by enquiring if it were likely that any one in his senses would be capable of so rabid a folly as to sign bills of exchange to the amount of three hundred thousand francs, without knowing whether he had a right so to do? He affirmed that every man of the world was naturally suspicious of his neighbour to a certain extent; no person, experienced in the ways of life, ever put unlimited confidence in another. These were sad truths; but moral maxims were generally disagreeable to the ear. Under all these circumstances, the Procureur du Roi felt it his imperious duty to demand that the full penalty of the law should be put in force on the present occasion; and that, according to the 2nd Chapter, 3rd Section, and 147th Article, of the Penal Code, the accused should be condemned to twenty years' hard labour at the galleys, that being the *maximum* of the punishment allowed by the law in such instances.

The Procureur du Roi seated himself amidst a solemn silence. His speech had made a considerable impression upon the multitude of spectators: the last orator generally prevails with vulgar minds, because they have not the memory to recollect, nor the sense to compare the defence of the former one with the refutation of the latter. But this was not the case with the jury. In France the meanest individual, as well as the highest, is certain of obtaining justice; and the presence of the public minister in every court, save the Tribunals of Commerce, is an advantage and a measure of jurisprudence which cannot be sufficiently appreciated.

After an hour's consultation, the jury returned to the court, and the foreman declared that the majority* was agreed to find a verdict

* The twelve individuals, who compose a jury, are not obliged, according to the French laws, to be unanimous in their decisions. A majority of two-thirds can deliver a verdict.

against the prisoner; but that the opinion was coupled with a strong recommendation to mercy, as there were many extenuating and even doubtful circumstances connected with the whole transaction. The judges then whispered together for some time; and at length the President pronounced the definitive sentence of the court, which found De Rosann guilty of the crime laid to his charge; but on account of his youth, of many circumstances in his favour, and of the recommendation of the jury, the severe penalty of the law, the full force of which had been demanded by the public minister, was commuted to a milder punishment; and De Rosann was condemned to ten years' hard labour in the criminal prisons of Brest.

When the awful annunciation met his ears, the unfortunate youth fainted in Mr. Clayton's arms; and was borne, rather than conducted back to his dungeon in a state bordering on distraction. But the worthy uncle of Eloise whispered comfort in his ear; he assured him that so far as it regarded himself, he was not only convinced of his young friend's innocence, but that he would ever dissuade his niece from contracting another engagement; and he knew Mrs. Clayton's maternal affection too well to suppose that she would force her daughter's inclination in so delicate a matter. These words considerably soothed the mind of the unfortunate Alfred; and the kind-hearted Mr. Clayton even went so far as to promise that he would occasionally accompany Eloise to visit her lover for a few moments in his miserable cell. The gratitude of De Rosann's wounded soul was beyond all expression: he thanked his benefactor a thousand times, and hope kindled a feeble flame in his bosom where all hitherto was darkness and obscurity.

And Eloise *did* visit De Rosann in his dungeon; and she promised an eternal fidelity; and her last words, ere she left him, called heaven to witness the oath of unchangeable affection which she thus solemnly pledged.

Amongst the brilliant circle of acquaintances and friends that the now forsaken Alfred once adorned, was a nobleman of high rank, who enjoyed a lucrative situation near the person of the king. To him did Mr. Clayton address a petition in behalf of De Rosann. The nobleman generously undertook to interest himself in the cause of a fellow-creature in whose innocence he himself believed; and the royal mercy was not solicited in vain. Charles X., with all his faults, was not of a cruel nor uncompromising disposition: he instantly lent an attentive ear to the prayer that was offered up before his throne; and the sentence of De Rosann was commuted to a sojourn of five years instead of ten at the galleys.

Eloise accompanied Mr. Clayton—but of course these visits were unknown to her mother: it was the first secret the innocent maiden had ever concealed from the knowledge of her only parent; and even now her repugnance to act against that parent's wishes was scarcely overcome by the reasoning of her uncle, whose heart was not obdurate enough to deprive two fond lovers of each other's society, and whose conviction of Alfred's innocence made him act a generous part towards the unhappy young man—Eloise accompanied Mr. Clayton to Bicêtre (whither De Rosann had been removed a few days previously) to be

the bearer of the joyful tidings that awaited him. Hope then assumed brighter colours—five years would soon elapse—and the tender couple already saw a smiling future not far distant. Mr. Clayton wiped away tears of mingled joy and sorrow from his eyes.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONVICTS.

It was on the twenty-seventh of April, 1830, in the reign of the good King Charles the Tenth, that a number of convicts left the walls of Bicêtre, under a strong escort of Gendarmes, to be conducted to Brest. The rays of the rising sun had scarcely changed the dubious twilight into a certain dawn—a cold breeze swept around the gloomy towers of the prison, which the criminals were nevertheless averse to quit—and the threatening appearance of the heavens seemed to give notice of an impending storm. The clanking of the martial weapons of the mounted police—the haggard faces and shivering forms of the malefactors—the rattling of their chains—the frowning pyramid of buildings whence those unhappy beings had ere now issued—and the dreariness of the weather, all combined to strike terror to the hearts of two individuals, who stood at a short distance from the cavalcade, and gazed upon the procession with more than common curiosity pictured in their anxious countenances.

The chain of galley-slaves,* as it is called in France, was composed of about fifty or sixty men. The moment the doors of Bicêtre were thrown open, they had issued forth two at a time, such being the manner in which they were fettered together—and paired off to their respective situations in the inglorious rank. Eighteen or twenty Gendarmes, bearing loaded carabines at their backs and pistols in the holsters attached to their saddles, guarded the prisoners with most scrupulous care, and offered an additional guarantee for their safety. Of the impossibility of overcoming such a force the malefactors were well aware; and if they cherished any scheme towards liberating themselves from the ignominious shackles that confined them, it was procrastinated until their arrival at Brest should furnish them with a better opportunity of putting the design into execution, and a less distant prospect of success. For singular as it may appear to the reader, it is however a notorious fact, that few criminals have outwitted the cunning or defeated the diligence of the Gendarmes on their road to the walls of Brest and Toulon; whereas a month seldom passes without witnessing the escape of a convict from one of those towns.

Few spectators were present on this occasion to glut their selfish curiosity with the sight of human degradation: there was but little novelty attached to the mournful ceremony; and in France the public journals seldom take notice of the days fixed for executing criminals,

* *La chaîne des galériens*: we shall henceforth, with the permission of the courteous reader, anglicise this expression.

or transporting a chain of galley-slaves from one place to another. Apart from the scanty crowd of idlers, and drawn thither by motives far different from those that attracted the rest, stood the two individuals we have before alluded to. They were as motionless as statues—one clung to the other's arm—but the eyes of both were turned towards the same point—their looks dwelt upon the youngest, the most dejected, and the most remarkable as to form and feature, of the convicts. Tears trickled down their cheeks, as they gazed upon the youth whom misfortune had condemned to so sad a destiny. But they spoke not a word, uttered not a syllable—grief with them was dumb as to ejaculation, although it were proclaimed by a thousand tongues on their death-like features—and that internal sorrow which their countenances betrayed, was more acute than can be described.

The object of their solicitude, whom the reader has doubtless recognised to be Alfred de Rosann, was one of the handsomest of God's creatures. Bowed down as he was to the earth with a deep sense of shame and degradation, still did the only half-suppressed energies of a noble mind flash from his dark eyes, and stamp him at once as a being totally different from the rest of the motley group in which he now found himself. His graceful form was not robbed of its perfections by the unseemly garb that enveloped it; nor could the beauty of his regular features be disfigured by the traces of anguish and despair. His years had perhaps scarcely reached their twenty-fourth summer; in stature he was somewhat above the standard height of a Frenchman; his figure was rather slender than athletic; his hair was black; his eyes were large and dark; and his hands and feet small even to a fault. Let us leave him a moment to his bitter reflections, and direct the reader's attention to those individuals who appear so deeply interested in his fate.

The first was an elderly man, with white hair, and a pale brow on which sate untimely wrinkles. And yet that hoariness of locks and those numerous traces on his forehead were more the effects of deep thought, and settled melancholy, than the work of years; for his age scarcely exceeded five and forty. He was tall, well-formed, and possessed features far from disagreeable. In his youth he must have been one of those who, endowed with many gifts from the hands of capricious Nature, are calculated to win the favour of the fair sex, and make their way in the world, if they have no fortune of their own, through the *medium* of an auspicious marriage. He was dressed in deep black, and on his left arm hung a large cloak, with which, despite of the bitter chill of the morning, he thought not of covering himself. His ideas were too deeply occupied by another and more material affair than the cloudy sky and the impending storm: had a second deluge commenced, he would not have perceived the force of the falling waters. There are times when the soul of man is thus abstracted from the scenes of frequent occurrence; and when its reflections are alone engaged in the contemplation of unusual sorrows. It would almost seem that our existence is now and then marked by moments in which we can say to our imaginations, "Ponder on this evil which has befallen us, and on nought besides." And how faithfully—Oh! far too faithfully are we obeyed! So it appeared to be with the individual we are describing. That manly form stood erect

upon a little eminence, regardless of the cold which even made the Gendarmes, whose constitutions were better inured to hardships than his—for his appearance bespoke the gentleman—nay, more, it betrayed the rich man reared in the lap of luxury—fain to draw their military cloaks around them. But he shivered not—there was a burning fire in his soul that made him indifferent to the bitterness of the morning.

And he had a companion with him; but *her* delicate frame was carefully surrounded by the folds of an ample cloak, beneath which the graces of her person might be well conceived: for so lovely a head never belonged to a faulty form. This reasoning is scarcely correct, you will say, gentle reader; but ideas of beauty, according to *Descartes*, are painted in the phantasy; and those ideas not unfrequently make the philosopher himself forget his logic, and write at random: in this case, however, it will be found that our assertions were not rashly hazarded.

The dark blue eyes of this beautiful creature were suffused in tears; and her whole countenance wore the appearance of despair. There was no possibility of mistaking the heart-rending expression of her lips apart, of her head moving, as frequent sighs agitated her bosom, and of her quickly repeated sobs. A misanthrope would have wept at that distressing spectacle; the man-hater of Athens must have relented, had he beheld the unfeigned woe of so young and fair a person. But no description can convey to the mind of the reader a competent idea of her intense agony; the support she derived from the right arm of her companion alone prevented her from falling.

It is scarcely necessary to inform the reader that these individuals were no other than the excellent-hearted Mr. Clayton, and the lovely Eloise.

A deep silence had ensued on their part the moment that the cavalcade issued from the gates of Bicêtre; and while the Gendarmes were occupied in arranging the ranks in which the squadron of criminals was formed, the weeping girl feebly waved her handkerchief to him who was the object of so much solicitude on her part, and on that of her companion. But Alfred either saw her not, or purposely hung down his head to avoid meeting her glances: and when she noticed this, her tears fell the more abundantly. A quarter of an hour elapsed ere the procession was ready to move on; and then, when many of the convicts turned round to bid farewell, as it were, to the prison behind them, De Rosann ventured to raise his eyes for an instant—they met those of Eloise and her uncle—and one expressive look proclaimed how much her affectionate kindness was appreciated. That look spoke volumes—volumes of gratitude, of love, of sorrow, and yet of hope. Her lips moved—'twas a prayer to heaven that she offered for the welfare of the unhappy young man—and as the galley-slaves now began their doleful march, Mr. Clayton hurried his tender charge to a carriage that waited near, and they were speedily far away from the walls of Bicêtre.

Meantime the chain moved onward, and soon left the sovereign city of Europe far behind. From the summit of a hill where the troop reposed for a moment, that vast assemblage of edifices was seen stretching over the wide plain on which it stands like the Babylon of ancient

days, and its thousand towers appeared to mock the threatening sky. The rays of the sun, now falling on this hemisphere less languidly than when the convicts first began their march, gilded the lofty dome of the Hospital of the Invalids and made it glitter like a distant lighthouse on some tall rock. The dark and gloomy towers of Notre Dame, that seemed to defy the ravages of time, and despise the centuries which had already passed over their heads, frowned above the myriads of dwellings around them, and raised their parapets to heaven like two Goliaths in the midst of a mighty army. Nor less did the beams of that morning sun irradiate the summit of St. Genevieve,* within whose vaults repose the ashes of heroes, of philosophers, and of statesmen. The pinnacles of St. Sulpice, the Sorbonne, and the University caught those gladdening rays; the sepulchres of Pere La Chaise on one side, and the tall buildings of Montmartre on the other, closed in the northern direction this panoramic view of Paris.

Tears stood in Alfred de Rosann's eyes, as the chain once more resumed its march, and as the gay picture of the French metropolis faded from his sight. He had indulged in the pleasures of that metropolis—he had tasted of the sweets collected so profusely in that hive of luxury and delight—he had shone in the most brilliant circles of fashion—he had mingled with the nobles of France at the splendid court of the royal Charles—and now, what was he?—a degraded outcast! “Oh!” thought he, as he cast a sickening look on his companions, “that the name of De Rosann should ever be thus disgraced! Oh! that the grave did not sooner close over me, before those accursed fetters should have stamped my infamy, and entered into my soul! La Motte! La Motte! could'st thou but now see him who put his confidence in thee, and whom thy villany has brought to shame!”

“You are melancholy, my friend,” said the individual to whom he was attached by the ignominious bond; “cheer up your spirits, and don't let the others see you take it thus to heart, or by the eternal God!” he added with a peculiar emphasis, “it will cost you your life!”

“How?” enquired De Rosann, after a moment's hesitation as to whether he should answer or not.

“Speak in a whisper, my young bird,” returned the other, “and I shall be glad to converse with you: but if you let every ear become acquainted with the nature of our talk, I shall hold my tongue at once.”

“Well—well,” muttered the youth hastily.

“No impatience, my dear boy—and I will stand your friend,” said the convict with most ineffable coolness. “This is my third visit to the *bagne*;† and a man has not been there twice already without having profited by a little experience. If you mope, and cry, and look dull, the others will mistrust you; and as they are obliged more or less to make friends of each other, they'll very soon put you out of the way.”

“They would not murder me?” asked De Rosann with a shudder.

* Now called the Pantheon.

† The prisons in which the convicts are confined at Brest, Tou on, &c.

"And why not? There are many at the *bagne* who are condemned for murder: they murdered to get money, and in so doing they risked their liberty—aye, and even their heads. Well, then," continued the convict, "do you think they would scruple to slit your wind-pipe, if your presence marred or interfered with an escape?"

A cold sweat stood on De Rosann's brow—an indescribable pang shot through his heart—his brain whirled—his eyes became dim.

"Come, come," cried his *soi-disant* friend; "cheer up, my good fellow—and do not give way to this cursed melancholy. How long are you condemned for?"

"Five years," was the reply, in a voice almost choked with emotion.

"And I for ten: but if I do not see the good walls of Paris once within as many months, then let Pierre Belle-Rose lose his excellent reputation for cunning and craft."

"Ah! how?" enquired De Rosann.

"There is not a soul," continued the convict, "either in our chain, or at the *bagne*—unless indeed it be yourself—that has not an idea and a hope of escape sooner or later. This is the reason which obliges us to make confidants of our companions; and the same may account to you wherefore a religious, sulky, moping fellow, who would betray a friend to gain the governor's favour, is suspected. But I will help you to weather all difficulties, if you only connive with me to attain the grand object. What is your crime?"

"I was accused of forgery," answered De Rosann, a deep scarlet suffusing his whole countenance.

"A very gentlemanly and noble perpetration," continued Belle-Rose, for such was the name of the individual to whom De Rosann was chained. "I hope the amount was considerable."

"Three hundred thousand francs."

"*Tonnerre de Dieu!*" exclaimed the convict, gazing on his youthful companion in admiration mingled with respect: "I suppose you are not lacking in ready cash then?"

"I have not a single *sou*," was the laconic answer.

"God knows you cannot have less," rejoined Pierre Belle-Rose, his admiration and his respect for De Rosann essentially diminishing.

"Every *centime* would have been taken from me by the Gendarmes the moment I was captured, even had I concealed cash about my person."

"See what it is never to have been at the galleys during one's life," cried Belle-Rose in a compassionate tone of voice; "he does not even know how to conceal his money! Poor young man! But at the next town we must get a supply.—*Ha! ça, mon brave*," continued the experienced convict, once more addressing himself to De Rosann, "there are two features in your tale that appear somewhat inconsistent. Now, as we have no secrets amongst ourselves, I must demand an explanation. In the first place, how does it happen that you did not decamp with your three hundred thousand francs, and place the frontier between you and the police? and in the second place, I cannot conceive how condemnation for twenty years, which is the punishment for a forgery like your's, could be changed to a paltry five?"

"In the first place, then," replied De Rosann, willing to conciliate Pierre Belle-Rose, "as regards the decamping, I must inform you that I was arrested for the forgery only ten minutes after I knew it had been committed; and in the second place, my youth, and the eventual intercession of an old nobleman, obtained a commutation of the severity of my sentence."

At this moment the chain entered Versailles, and the Gendarmes endeavoured to enforce a strict silence amongst the prisoners.

"Are you not very much ashamed, De Rosann, for all the people are at their windows to gaze upon us?" enquired Belle-Rose in a whisper that was scarcely audible.

"God knows I am," returned the youth in agony.

"Silence, thieves!" thundered a Gendarme.

"There, my dear boy," muttered Belle-Rose, as he threw a handkerchief over Alfred's head, so as completely to cover his face.

"A thousand thanks," whispered the youth, feeling really grateful for this unexpected act of kindness.

In about five minutes he felt a trembling hand touch his pocket, and drop something heavy into it. A voice, almost choked with sobs, at the same time said, "God bless thee, my poor dear—dear nephew; and recollect that at thy return, thine uncle will be glad to give thee an asylum!"

De Rosann would have turned round to convince the compassionate personage of his mistake; but a word from Belle-Rose checked him, and he continued his weary march without altering his position in the rank.

"Now we are outside the town," cried Belle-Rose, "and you may take off the handkerchief. Let us see how much the old fellow has given you."

"What—how?" asked De Rosann, momentarily forgetting the circumstance of a heavy object having been slid into his pocket.

"*Your uncle*," replied Belle-Rose with an ironical grin.

De Rosann drew forth a purse in which there were a few gold coins.

"Bravo! bravo!" exclaimed Pierre, laughing heartily; and soon the whole chain of galley-slaves was made acquainted with the contents of the *good uncle's* bequest. Even the Gendarmes joined in the general mirth, which was not a little heightened by the ignorance of De Rosann as to the means practised to obtain the supply. His curiosity was however speedily satisfied.

"I met the nephew of that worthy old gentleman at Bicêtre," said Pierre Belle-Rose, "and learnt his whole history, for he was blest with an extraordinary mania of communicativeness. He told me that his excellent and kind uncle lived at Versailles—that this uncle would look out for him when the chain passed through the town—and that the handkerchief over the face was to be the signal, if he were one of the number. Thus, thanks to thy modesty, did the rag betray thee, De Rosann!"

At this communication the galley-slaves in the immediate vicinity of Belle-Rose set up a hearty laugh; and that individual, willing to maintain the mirth he had so successfully originated, without preface or prelude, cleared his throat, and commenced the following air in a voice far from discordant and disagreeable:—

THE POWERS OF WINE.

OF wealth and glory monarchs boast—
 His mistress' charms the lover sings ;—
 For me the glass and jovial toast
 Excel the bliss of swains and kings.
 The flowing bowl
 Inspires the soul,
 While boist'rous laughter round us rings, —
 The jest and song
 Our mirth prolong,
 And sorrow flies on drooping wings.
 To welcome in the morning,
 Around the board we'll stay ;
 And when the light is dawning,
 To bed we'll haste away !

Existence is a changing scene,
 Of happiness and woe combin'd ;
 When our meridian sky's serene,
 Dark clouds are menacing behind.
 The ills of fate
 Our steps await,
 And lead us on, to danger blind :—
 Then learn to quaff
 The bowl, and laugh
 When Fortune's freaks perplex the mind.
 To welcome in the morning,
 Around the board we'll stay ;
 And when the light is dawning,
 To bed we'll haste away !

Is life so long that we can spare
 A day to sighs—a night to tears ?—
 Reflection but increases care,
 And conjures up a host of fears.
 Then wherefore bring
 A blight on spring,
 And crush the blossoms of our years ?
 Epernay's juice
 Will e'er produce
 That which no change of season sears.
 To welcome in the morning,
 Around the board we'll stay ;
 And when the light is dawning,
 To bed we'll haste away !

The soldier in the battle-plain—
 The sailor on the boundless deep—
 The courtier in the monarch's train—
 The criminal who fears to sleep—
 Admit that wine
 Has charms divine
 The soul from mournful thoughts to keep ;
 And haste their woes
 Or anxious throes
 In sweet oblivion's bliss to steep.

To welcome in the morning,
 Around the board we'll stay ;
 And when the light is dawning,
 To bed we'll haste away.

The Mussulman in festive hour—
 The midnight robber arm'd to slay—
 The poet in his mistress' bower—
 The trav'ller on his lonely way—
 Their blessings shed
 On Bacchus' head,
 And quaff the bowl with laughter gay :
 The rich—the poor
 The God adore,
 And constant own his potent sway.
 To welcome in the morning,
 Around the board we'll stay ;
 And when the light is dawning,
 To bed we'll haste away.

In wine and women every ill
 Originates—so priests declare :
 But we will drain the goblet still,
 And then to love a moment spare.
 Our fervent boast
 Shall be the toast
 That tells the praise of woman fair ;
 The brimming bowl
 Can cheer the soul,
 And love defy th' advance of care.
 To welcome in the morning,
 Around the board we'll stay ;
 And when the light is dawning,
 To bed we'll haste away.

"Many a time have I sung that pleasant stave to a host of good fellows," observed Belle-Rose, as he brought the strain to a conclusion. "I learnt it from a prince of a companion at the board, and one who was rather famous in his way. He accompanied me to Toulon some time ago—we were re-inforced by him and a dozen others at Lyons—and there he is now for any thing that I know."

"What was he condemned for?" enquired a convict.

"For the small mistake he made about the old ruin in the neighbourhood of Lyons, you know," answered Belle-Rose.

"I cannot say that I recollect the circumstance," observed the other.

"Then I will recall it to your memory," continued the facetious and talkative Pierre. "You must remember that at a little distance from Lyons are the remains of a very old castle, which formerly belonged to some ancient family whose name I have forgotten. At the present moment the four bare walls are alone standing; and a poor farmer some years ago became-proprietor of them together with the half-acre of land upon which they are situate. One day a gentleman called upon the farmer and offered to purchase the ruins and the space of ground they occupy, asserting that he was a distant connexion of the family from which the property had passed away, and that he was

desirous it should not be possessed by a stranger. The farmer was delighted at thus being enabled to dispose of that which to him was entirely useless, and a bargain was speedily concluded. The sum of five hundred francs was the price offered—and that of a thousand was immediately tendered; whereupon the overjoyed farmer hastened with the gentleman to Lyons, where they sought for a notary to draw up the necessary deed.—‘You will probably do me the favour—for the sake of the honour of our family’—said the gentleman to the notary—‘to represent in the deed that I have paid fifty thousand francs for the land, instead of a thousand; and your fees shall be reckoned in proportion?’—‘Certainly,’ replied the notary: and the document was drawn up accordingly. No sooner had the gentleman thus obtained possession of the ruins, than he hastened to Paris, called upon a money-lender, exhibited his title-deed, and demanded a loan on mortgage of thirty thousand francs. The money-lender wrote to the mortgage-office at Lyons to ascertain if any other sums had been raised upon the property; and receiving a satisfactory reply, he advanced the money forthwith. The time of payment arrived—no cash was of course forthcoming—and the money-lender hastened to Lyons to make good his title to the estate in the place of the late proprietor. His astonishment and wrath may be readily conceived when he found that he had given thirty thousand francs for a few old bricks standing on scarcely half an acre of land. He, however, succeeded in capturing the gentleman, who was foolish enough to return to Lyons for some purpose or another so soon as he had raised his money, and the Procureur du Roi was put in possession of the particulars of the case. The Gendarmes were then set to work—the gentleman was caught—and shortly afterwards a judge and jury politely requested him to accompany me and some fifty or sixty others in a little excursion to Toulon—an invitation which he could not possibly refuse.”

“Admirable!” exclaimed the convict, for whose benefit this anecdote had been especially narrated; “I think I have heard the story before; but it bears telling a second time. Vidocq—who, by the bye, is only innocent in his own book—relates nothing equal to it.”

“Nothing,” coincided Belle-Rose; “it is the most ingenious and brilliant achievement recorded in the annals of French *mistakes*. I would sacrifice all my reputation, even if I were Vidocq himself, of whom you have just spoken, to be the author of so splendid a feat. An epic poem cannot ensure a more lasting renown than this exploit.”

“I don’t know any thing about epic poems,” observed the convict with whom Belle-Rose was conversing; “but this I do know, that I should have very much liked to have had the thirty thousand francs.”

“You are not exceedingly difficult to please, my worthy friend,” exclaimed Belle-Rose.—“Poor fellow! I suppose he is still at Toulon, and I shouldn’t be at all surprised if he endeavoured to raise a mortgage on his chains. He’s ingenious enough for any thing. Do you not think it was a most glorious trick, De Rosann?” demanded Belle-Rose, after a momentary pause, and turning abruptly round towards the unhappy Alfred, who was too much absorbed in his own woes, and too deeply disgusted at all that was passing around him, to wear a countenance which invited conversation.

He was accordingly about to have replied somewhat bitterly to his companion; but an instant's salutary reflection showed the folly and uselessness of irritating one who might perhaps aid him to make his escape hereafter, and at all events initiate him in the ways and habits of the *bagne*. But this circumstance brought the sense of his own wretchedness a thousand times more forcibly than ever to his mind; for it not only exemplified to him the villany, the hypocrisy, and the deceit of which his companions were capable; it also compelled him to acknowledge within himself the disagreeable and repugnant truth that he would be condemned to become a partner in their vices, and often the actual agent of their turpitude. To one, who has been brought up with the feelings of a gentleman, who has been educated in the schools of honour, of integrity, and virtue, and whose soul knows not how to descend to such petty instances of larceny or vulgar dissimulation as were hourly practised by the members of the chain, a situation like De Rosann's must be the most insupportable. Cut off from all intercourse with the polite portion of society, linked to murderers, burglars, and robbers, guarded by ruthless soldiers whose uncompassionating dispositions expelled all sympathy or even lenity, and on the road to the sink of every vice, the receptacle of ruined characters—nature's outlaws, as they might be called,—De Rosann would have yielded himself up entirely to despair, and have greedily seized the means of putting an end to a miserable existence if such means presented themselves, had not a distant hope—shining like a single star in a horizon where all else was dark—prompted him to cling to life, and to support to the utmost of his ability the horrors that might be in store for him. This philosophical resignation, which could even tutor his mind to see a blooming future succeed the five years of distress and of infamy to which he was now doomed by the laws of his country, was only the result of long reflection and self-communion. When the awful sentence was first pronounced upon him, his actions, his thoughts, and his words were those of a madman: days passed away—weeks flew over his head in his dreary cell at Bicêtre—and at length the clamorous grief became tempered down into the moody resignation and the occasional indifference to every thing, unless some tender recollection, some softening reminiscence awoke his better feelings, and wrung burning tears from his eyes, and bitter—Oh! good God! how bitter—sighs from his breast.

CHAPTER V.

BELLE-ROSE AND CHAMPIGNON.

THE storm, which for many hours had threatened to burst above the convicts' heads, and which was impelled by a north-easterly breeze in the same direction pursued by them, towards mid-day commenced with appalling violence. Deluges of rain drenched the wretched malefactors and their guards to the skin, ere a ruined shed could afford them a partial shelter. The thunder rolled along the face of heaven in long, loud, and frequent claps; and the lightning followed each of those celestial cannon with vivid flashes. There needed but the earthquake to have made the war of elements complete.

The Gendarmes and the galley-slaves huddled together without respect for persons, the former now pressing close to the latter, whose very contiguity a few minutes before, they would have deemed infectious. But the dilapidated barn, which formed their present refuge, was too much circumscribed as to space, to allow so many individuals to be greatly at their ease. The vulgar adage of "Any port in a storm" was never better practised than on this occasion.

The Gendarmes of France form without a doubt the first body of police in the world. Their well-caparisoned horses are invariably in much better condition than those belonging to the regular cavalry. Their uniform is also simple and elegant at the same time; and their appearance far more military than many of the horse regiments. In Paris they wear the bear-skin cap that usually dignifies the grenadier; in the departments this unwieldy head-dress is supplied by a neat cocked hat, worn "athwart-ships." They are moreover peculiarly clean in their persons—their sabres as well polished as a Parisian looking-glass—their *aiguillettes* as white as snow. There is not a speck of dirt upon their yellow belts, nor a mark of grease on their well-brushed blue coats. Their grey trowsers, with broad red stripes descending from the waist to the boot, appear as if they had only just left the tailor's shop; and the fierce moustachio and the thick whisker give an additional warlike air to their fine persons. They are as remarkable for their civility to individuals who are fortunate enough not to be in their custody, and who may chance to solicit information of them as to the turnings and deviations of a road, &c., as they are austere and repulsive to their prisoners. They are never known to receive a bribe—they may sometimes render an unfortunate being a service—but this occasional generosity is the result of a sudden and evanescent philanthropy, and is not to be elicited by hire. Their wants are circumscribed to a little—a few *sous* in their pockets to purchase tobacco, a *petit verre de cognac* the first thing in the morning, and a bottle of beer in the course of the day, are all they require beyond their regular meals. They are therefore temperate and trust-worthy, incorruptible as to the integrity with which they discharge their duty, diligent, active, and penetrating. Their cunning and alertness in detecting crime, and in securing the authors of it, are proverbial: the quickness with which they follow up the slightest suspicion, and the important and correct conjectures they form from

the most trivial circumstance, when employed in hunting out a malefactor, are not less notorious. And such in habiliments, in principles, and in dispositions, were the Gendarmes who escorted the chair of convicts that were now delighted to seek the protection of an almost roofless barn against the violence of the storm. Let us take advantage of the moment to say one word relative to Belle-Rose.

This hardy *galerien* or *forçat* was a man of about thirty-five years of age. His life had been a continual scene of debauchery and licentiousness, save when the prisons of Brest or Toulon furnished him with quarters which the law carefully provided for so turbulent a subject. He had inherited some fortune on attaining his majority; but an ill-assorted marriage, vicious examples, bad associates, and a natural predilection for gaming, soon compelled him to descend to any means to obtain the necessary supplies for supporting his extravagances. The first time that he expiated a portion of his crimes at Brest, was for bigamy. He had inveigled a rich widow into the matrimonial noose, and was visited the next morning by his other wife, who doubtless called to congratulate him on his felicitous hymeneal speculation. An unwelcome *eclaircissement* took place; a trial ensued—and the galleys received Monsieur Pierre Belle-Rose. But chains and lofty walls could neither curb his restless disposition, nor abridge, for any length of time, his personal freedom. At the expiration of three or four months he had enfranchised himself from the limits of his dungeon in company with another convict named Theodore, and was once more a free man in the open fields. Full of lively hope, and emboldened by success, he pushed bravely on towards Paris, having bidden adieu to the partner of his flight at a short distance from Brest. The inconvenience of travelling in France without a *passepport en règle*,* added to the dread of encountering the Gendarmes who might demand his papers, and arrest him when they found he had none, obliged him, notwithstanding his unwearied perseverance, to waste upwards of ten days in his journey from Brest to the metropolis. During this tedious march he was fain to make divers turnings, and to follow many circuitous routes which the traveller without fear would have avoided; and he was not unfrequently obliged to conceal himself for hours together in woods and dense thickets, whenever he arrived in the vicinity of a town, or in the neighbourhood of barracks. At length the stupendous domes and towers of Paris greeted his anxious eyes—and he felt his spirits rise, and his heart leap within him, as he entered the vast city by the Faubourg du Roule, about an hour after sunset, in the month of October. That day year he was again arrested, and was compelled to renew his acquaintance with the *Procureur du Roi*. It appeared that he had contrived to hire a magnificent house, ready furnished in a most costly manner, of an old French baron who was desired by the physicians to retire for the summer months to his *chateau* in the country. A short time after the worthy peer's back was turned upon Paris, Belle-Rose sold the furniture, the plate, the linen—in fine, the whole moveable contents of the

* A passport that has gone through the necessary formalities to make it available.

hotel, by a private auction. Having secured a considerable sum of money through the medium of this nefarious transaction, he was about to decamp, when the porter of the house, whom he had expressly discharged the moment *Monseigneur* departed for his *maison de campagne*, apprized the venerable baron's notary of Pierre Belle-Rose's proceedings, and thus procured his prompt arrest. Conveyed to Bicêtre a second time, to be thence transported to Toulon, he was speedily recognised as a *forçat évadé* (a galley-slave who has escaped) from the prisons of Brest. This unpleasant discovery was the cause of his person being again dragged before the Court of Assize, and an *extra* three years were tacked on to the five which the sentence of the court had already condemned him to pass at the galleys. To be brief, he escaped a second time with a person of the name of Ledoux, and managed to elude the vigilance of the police from that moment until about the period which marks the commencement of our tale. A swindling transaction, under peculiarly aggravating circumstances, once more gave him into the grasp of justice, and we now find him on his road to Brest, doomed to reside there ten years, unless his good fortune or his cunning restore him to liberty ere the expiration of that period.

In person Belle-Rose was indifferently well formed, being short and sturdy. His shoulders were of an uncommon width—his neck short—his complexion florid—and a broad grin of good humour, which not unfrequently lulled asleep the eye of suspicion, was perpetually on his countenance. Like all Frenchmen, he had a great deal of levity in his conversation; and often amongst his dissipated associates at Paris had he maintained a general round of unceasing laughter, when he recounted the various exploits and *espiegleries* in which he had been the principal actor. Nerved with a certain philosophical indifference to passing events, even as prosperity or adversity affected himself, he recked but little for the galleys of Brest, so long as health and vigour were spared him; particularly since he ever cherished the sanguine hope of being enabled to effect his escape within a short period.

Such was the individual to whom De Rosann was shackled. Immediately in front of him, and attached to another convict, was a personage of quite a different character; and as they are both exceedingly necessary to the plan of this tale, we hope the reader will deign to pardon us, if we “bestow a little more of our tediousness” upon him, as Dogberry has it, and request a moment's attention to Monsieur Champignon,* *ex-restaurateur* of the Boulevard du Temple, and in happier times a successful rival of the far-famed *Cadran Bleu*.

Now the *Cadran Bleu*, as we must inform our English readers who have not been in Paris, and who have never read the novels of Paul de Kock nor Auguste Ricarde—but in these days, when the rage for travelling is so universal, few have not visited that gay city of luxury, pleasure, and delight—the *Cadran Bleu*, or *Blue Clock*, is a famous eating-house, where merchants in a small way, the more

* The English of the word *Champignon* is “Mushroom.”

respectable class of tradesmen, attorneys' upper clerks, actors, the *gentlemen* who work in the government offices of their Excellencies the Ministers, and individuals of that stamp, celebrate weddings, birth-days, holidays, &c. The *Cadran Bleu* is consequently in great vogue; and it enjoyed, perhaps, even a higher repute in the times when Champignon opened a similar establishment, which, being in the same neighbourhood, was instituted with the express determination of rivalling the monopolizing *restaurant*.

Champignon was a short, fat, asthmatic man, with small grey eyes, a pug nose, a wide mouth, and a good set of teeth. His age might be about forty—but his wisdom kept not pace with his years; for he had scarcely two ideas, and those were connected with gastronomy. All his *similes* were drawn from delicious viands—his metaphors bore perpetual reference to wines or liqueurs—and the only flowers of rhetoric he was ever known to garnish his discourse with, were universally founded on *fricandeaus*, *cotelettes a la jardiniere*, *filet de bœuf saute*, &c. &c. &c.

It would have been well for Champignon had he attended to naught save his kitchen and his cookery-book; for his business thrived even better than his most sanguine anticipations had expected, and the *Cadran Rouge*, or Red Clock, soon spread its fame throughout the whole neighbourhood of the Boulevard du Temple and the Marais; or, to use the chivalrous language of ancient days, "its reputation was speedily bruited abroad." But Champignon's unlucky ideas of opposition and rivalry led him into a sad dilemma, which eventually caused him to take the high road for Brest, and which has now procured for ourselves and our readers the pleasure of his acquaintance. It appears that the worthy family of a grocer in the Rue Montmorenci, having resolved to celebrate the birth-day of some superannuated uncle, addressed a letter one morning by the two-penny post to the master of the *Cadran Bleu*, informing him that a party of five or six and twenty would dine at his house on a certain day, and that he must prepare a sumptuous repast, at which no luxury nor expense was to be grudged, so that the whole affair might be on a magnificent scale. This welcome epistle enclosed a bank-note of five hundred francs, or twenty pounds sterling of British money. It happened, through the negligence of the postman, that the letter fell into the hands of Champignon, who instantly wrote a reply, in which he declared that the *Cadran Bleu* had ceased to exist, that he had set up in the same line of business at the *Cadran Rouge*, that the ancient proprietor of the *Cadran Bleu* was a sleeping partner with him, and that if the family and its guests did not express the most unequivocal approbation of the way in which he would treat them, their money should be restored. This daring cheat succeeded. Little did the honest grocer care who "founded the feast," or at what house his friends partook of it, so long as it was good; and with regard to the perfection of the meats, the pastry, the dessert, and the wine, there was not a single dissentient voice. To be brief, the stratagem passed off so well, that Champignon, emboldened by the event of his artifice, soon adopted such various and crooked devices to abstract the custom of

the Cadran Bleu for the benefit of the Cadran Rouge, that suspicion became changed into conviction, doubts gave way to damning proofs, and the unfortunate wretch was condemned to accompany Pierre Belle-Rose and others on a small excursion to Brest.

Hitherto Champignon had not once opened his lips since the chain left the walls of Bicêtre: he maintained a strict silence, and appeared to be engaged in deep thought. But his face did not wear a very melancholy aspect; neither did sighs nor tears betray any extraordinary degree of feeling as to his present situation. It was, however, very evident that an important affair occupied his imagination; for never did Newton, when reflecting upon the centripetal and centrifugal properties of matter, appear more occupied by intense cogitation, than did Champignon at this moment. He seemed totally heedless of the weather, of his predicament, and of the presence of his companions.

This uncommon taciturnity shortly attracted the attention of Belle-Rose.

"*Messieurs*," said he, addressing those convicts who were nearest, "I dare swear this worthy gentleman, our honourable companion in misfortune," pointing to Champignon, "will enliven us with a song; for he is apparently a vastly entertaining fellow, if we may judge by his loquacity."

A loud and boisterous laugh at the *ex-restaurateur's* expense followed this speech,—for the hyperbole, which represented his silence, particularly pleased the galley-slaves.

"What is his name?" enquired Belle-Rose of a Gendarme, when the mirth he had excited was somewhat subsided.

"Champignon," was the abrupt answer.

"Ah! who calls?" exclaimed the object of the above interrogation, starting quickly from his meditative mood.

"Thine equal," returned Belle-Rose, affecting solemnity.

"Thou may'st be mine equal in misfortune, but certainly not in trussing a fowl," cried Champignon, peevishly.

"*Sacre bleu!* if it be not my old acquaintance of the Cadran Rouge!" ejaculated Belle-Rose, after a moment's hesitation.

"In what kitchen have we met? and what sauce have you invented?" asked the gastronome.

"Look me well in the face, my friend—and then recollect the gentleman who dined at your excellent house for a whole month, about two years ago, and who forgot to settle his little account ere his departure from Paris."

"And who was so fond of my beefsteak with tomata sauce?" enquired Champignon eagerly.

"The same," answered Belle-Rose.

"He always would have champagne *frappé à la glace*,* would he not?"

"Precisely."

"And that individual is yourself?" persisted Champignon eagerly.

"My own identical self."

* Iced.

"You have good taste in commanding a dinner, I opine."

"And you in cooking it."

"Still it is disheartening," observed Champignon, "not to be paid for that which costs us occasionally much labour."

"It is not a part of my system to draw the purse-strings at every instant," returned Belle-Rose gravely; "particularly when one finds a good-natured fellow like yourself, my dear Champignon, who is so easy with his credit. I recollect full well how noble was your conduct. Whenever you said a word about the bill, I praised your mutton cutlets, said your *vol-au-vent* was incomparable, and pledged my existence to the excellence of your wines; upon which you retreated to your kitchen with a complacent smile and an audible chuckle. On those days I was served with a better dinner than ordinarily."

"One of the identical *vols-au-vent*, to which you allude, would be no bad thing at this moment," cried Champignon.

"If wishing and having were synonyms," said Belle-Rose, "we should all be immediately free and rich."

"And seated at a *déjeuner à la fourchette*," added the gastronomer.

"Faith, would we! eh, De Rosann?" enquired Belle-Rose, familiarly tapping the youth upon the shoulder.

Alfred replied in the affirmative. We have already stated, or rather hinted, that certain interested motives, compelling the young man to look beyond the present hour, induced him to be condescending and civil to the experienced convict, from whose hardihood and knowledge of the *bagne* he hoped to reap considerable advantages. A long pause ensued, which was only occasionally interrupted by one of the chain humming a tune, or a Gendarme's swearing most bitterly and energetically against the rain that still continued to pour in torrents.

"Pray what were you thinking of so earnestly ere now, Monsieur Champignon?" enquired Belle-Rose, after a lengthened silence.

"I was racking my brains.—By the bye, talking of brains, how excellently were they served up at my house with the *tête de veau à la tortue*!"

"Those were calf's brains."

"Yes—yes; but all brains are the same, you know."

"Oh! indeed—and those that you were racking," cried Belle-Rose, with an ironical grin.

"I was endeavouring to discover a new method of cooking a mutton cutlet," answered Champignon seriously.

"And did you succeed?"

"To my heart's content; I shall call the viands thus arranged *côtelettes à la quadrille*."*

"Bravo!" cried Belle-Rose, laughing. "And does the Cadran Rouge—that *summum bonum* of life—that king of *restaurants*—still exist?"

"Alas! no"—answered Champignon with a sigh.

* A modern French gourmand lately invented *côtelettes à la mazurka*.

“And Madame Champignon?”

“Cold in the earth as a kidney-potato,” was the answer, accompanied by another sigh more deplorable than the former.

“That comely creature!” cried Belle-Rose, affecting a melancholy tone of voice, and assuming a comic-serious air, on purpose to draw out the communicative gastronomer.

“She was, indeed, a rare morsel—plump as a partridge—lively as an eel—and tender as a chicken!” exclaimed Champignon, enlogising in his own peculiar style his departed consort. “Me-seems that I see her still,” he continued, with tears in his eyes—“her sleeves tucked up above her elbows, beating eggs for my *omelettes aux fines herbes*, or picking raisins for the plum-puddings with which those gluttonous and coarse-feeding English delight to gorge themselves.”

“Doubtless ’twas a pretty spectacle,” remarked Belle-Rose.

“In sooth was it—while her very mouth watered at the dainties she so craftily prepared.”

“Craftily indeed! her reputation for disguising a cat *en gibelotte*, and for serving up horse-flesh as *filet de bœuf sauté*, was proverbial in the neighbourhood,” returned Belle-Rose.

“Gad! you knew her well!” exclaimed the delighted Champignon, not at all ashamed of this exposure of the *arcana* of his late kitchen. “A dearer woman never entered a larder, nor served *vin ordinaire* at thirty *sous* instead of *seven-franc* Bordeaux!”

At this moment a terrible noise was heard at the entrance of the barn that looked into a field adjoining the road, and half-a-dozen cows, impelled from their pasturage by the violence of the storm, and instinctively seeking the shed in which they were penned up at night, rushed amongst the convicts and the Gendarmes in a manner the most unceremonious. An universal shout on the part of the besieged, at this rude attack, terrified the intrusive animals; and Champignon, who stood foremost, was overthrown in a heap of manure. His wig fell off; and in stretching out his hand to recover it, he caught hold of one of the cows’ tails, and was dragged several paces before he would relinquish his grasp, so perfectly was he overcome by fear as to be convinced in his own mind that he held his wig. The convict, who was chained to Champignon, was dragged forward with him, as the fetters that attached them together were not of an extraordinary length. The retreat of the cows at last restored order; and Champignon’s wig, discovered amidst the same dirt into which he himself had fallen, was restored *in statu quo* to its owner’s head by the hand of Belle-Rose, while a hearty laugh at the appearance of the *ex-restaurateur*, who was disguised in filth that even clung to his *perruque*, resounded from every individual present save himself and De Rosann.

“Never mind,” exclaimed Belle-Rose in a consolatory tone of voice; “the rain will wash it all off again.”

“That’s true,” returned Champignon with a horrible grimace; “but at present I feel like a *perdreux aux choux*.”

In about a quarter of an hour the clouds cleared partially away from the face of heaven—the sun broke through the opening va-

pours—and the Gendarmes once more put their prisoners in motion. A very short distance was to be completed ere they would arrive at Pontchartrain, where a light repast of beans, bread, and water, would be dealt out to those unhappy beings whom the laws of their country had condemned to terrible penances and privations.

CHAPTER VI.

UNCLE THOMAS.

ARRIVED at Pontchartrain, the prisoners were conducted to a miserable inn or *cabaret*, where their meagre fare was speedily provided for them in the kitchen, while the Gendarmes sate down in an ante-chamber to a substantial breakfast of cold meat and wine, which latter is generally known in France by the name of *piquette*. De Rosaun rejected the odious pulse, but was fain to devour the bread to repress the cravings of his appetite: Champignon enquired if he could not be unchained from his comrade for a moment, and be accommodated with a saucepan, &c., to cook his beans *à la maitre d'hotel*; but on receiving an answer in the negative, he remained sulkily silent: and Belle-Rose occupied himself with the savoury spectacle of a couple of fowls that were roasting before the fire, under the care of a little girl of about thirteen or fourteen years of age, whom the Gendarmes called Felicité.

Presently a bright idea struck Belle-Rose. He beckoned the girl towards him, and seizing an opportunity when the backs of the Gendarmes were turned against the prisoners, he began the following conversation in a low whisper. His companions saw that a joke was in train; and not only on account of Belle-Rose's notorious facetious disposition, but also in strict observance of the principles of mutual abettance and aid which were never swerved from by them, they forbore to notice that any thing was going on.

"My little girl," said Belle-Rose, with a serious countenance, "where are your father and mother?"

"Father's dead—but mother's alive," was the reply.

"Your father's dead? Alas! alas!" murmured the convict, wiping his eyes: "and the good old lady—how is she?"

"Is it mother that you mean?"

"Precisely."

"She's not very old."

"No—no; the young lady, I meant—I knew she was not old; besides, your age proves that she is still in the bloom of youth."

"Mother is not a lady, neither; she keeps this inn. That's a lady, who lives at the white *chateau* yonder."

"Well—well—your mother, my dear—how is she?"

"She's got nothing ailing her, except her corns, that I know of," replied the girl ingenuously; "and they didn't prevent her from going to the neighbouring market this morning."

"And how far off is that market?"

"About a league across the fields."

"How unfortunate!" returned Belle-Rose, assuming a melancholy air.

"Why?" asked the girl, wondering what could be the meaning of these multifarious interrogations.

"Why! my love—why! Do you actually enquire *why*?—Have you never heard of a relative on your mother's side—?"

"Him, who was a night-man, do you mean?"

"No—no," said Belle-Rose, with difficulty suppressing a smile.

"My mother's brother, then—to be sure."

"You have never yet seen him?" whispered Belle-Rose, fearful of proceeding too precipitately.

"Not since I was five years old; he went as a soldier in 1819, I have been told," returned the girl.

"Embrace me, Felicité—embrace me, dear child! But no—I do not wish that those men should know who I am."

"And who are you?" enquired Felicité in astonishment.

"Thine uncle!" answered Belle-Rose solemnly.

"My uncle! I always heard he was a fine tall man."

"Oh! yes—and so I was; until misery, my child, reduced me to the condition in which you now see me."

"Does misfortune make people grow shorter, then?" asked the girl, with the most deplorable ignorance depicted on her countenance.

"Certainly, niece! I became a foot and a half shorter in one night through excess of woe."

"Ah! that's what makes the hump-backed barber, who's dying for love of mother, so little."

"To be sure it is. And do you not pity me?"

"Faith, do I! But how came you with those naughty men, my dear uncle?" enquired Felicité, casting a fearful glance upon the convicts.

"For doing a good action, my love."

"I thought only bad people were chained together?"

"O no—the good are often condemned unjustly, as I was," continued Belle-Rose. "I saw two men fighting in Paris—I ran up to separate them—they swore I was a thief, and that I intended to take advantage of their situation to steal their watches; I was accordingly arrested and carried off to gaol. I was tried and condemned!"

"Poor uncle! and what is that handsome young man, who is chained to you, to be punished for?" asked the girl in as low a whisper as possible, pointing towards De Rosann.

"For poisoning a gentleman and his wife, together with their seventeen children," was the answer.

"And that fat old fellow?" continued Felicité, alluding to Champignon.

"For making pies of dead bodies."

"Good God! with what a set of villains you are obliged to associate, dear uncle.—But what can I do for you? I'm sure if mother were here, she'd endeavour to make you comfortable; and those nasty beans, and that cold water and sour bread, are not good for a person condemned to walk all day long in chains."

"Kind creature! I want for nothing."

"A glass of wine?"

"O no—I seldom touch any thing strong; my habits are naturally temperate."

"A single glass—merely to recruit your spirits," persisted the girl tenderly.

"Well—one glass, then—but only one."

Felicité was about to disappear, to seek the lower regions of the house (or in other words the cellar), when Belle-Rose called her back.

"My love—for whom are those roasted fowls?"

"O we shall keep them till they're cold, for any one who happens to drop in during the day, to take a hasty morsel."

"Alas! 'tis a long time since I tasted meat; and for a whole fortnight I have eaten nothing at all," said the convict mournfully.

"Will you have those fowls? for I'm certain that if mother were here, she would willingly give them to you; and at her return from market, she'll applaud me for what I am doing."

"Since you offer so kindly, I must e'en accept them," said Belle-Rose, a smile of triumph playing upon his lips. "But, stay, my love: do you wrap them up in paper, and I'll consign them to my pockets on the sly; for the Gendarmes must not be allowed to catch a glimpse of our motions."

"They are very severe, then?"

"Yes—in the town they are obliged to be so: when no stranger's eyes are upon us, we may do as we like."

Felicité soon robbed the spit of its savoury burden; and having enveloped the fowls in paper, she cunningly transferred them to Belle-Rose's pockets, while his comrades turned away their eyes, affecting the utmost ignorance of the whole transaction.

"What shall I say to mother for you, uncle?" enquired the girl, when the above ceremony of *conveyance* was accomplished.

"Say!—say anything you like—that is, every thing kind and tender, my love; and rest assured God will prosper you for what you have done."

"Do you really think God saw me give you those fowls, and that he will bless me for it?"

"Most certainly: and the more you give, the more he will favour your undertakings through life. By the bye, my dear niece—on second thoughts—since you are so kind—although my habits be sober, and I rarely drink aught save pure spring water—still I may as well accept a glass of wine—for my legs are weak, and my strength is declining—and to-night I will remember you in my prayers."

The wine was tendered with as good a grace as were the fowls; and Champignon undertook to carry a bottle, on a hint being given him to that effect by Belle-Rose, whose pockets were already full.

In about a quarter of an hour the Gendarmes finished their last glass of *piquette*, and pushed aside the cold beef off which they had abundantly fed, although Champignon *did* mutter between his teeth that it would have been better in a *friceau*. They then called for

their cups of coffee—those universal concomitants to a Frenchman's meals—and two little glasses of *cognac*. While they were discussing these supernumerary dainties, an elderly woman, whom Felicité instantly called "Mother," entered the room. Having respectfully saluted the Gendarmes, with whom she appeared to be acquainted, and having cast a look of mingled commiseration and contempt on the prisoners, she laid aside her cloak, deposited her basket in a corner, passed into the kitchen, and enquired of her daughter "Who had been at the house during her absence?"

"My dear mother, something very extraordinary has happened," began Felicité, drawing her parent aside, and speaking in a whisper.

"Ah! what is it, my child?"

"Have you not often spoken of uncle Thomas, who's gone as a soldier?"

"Certainly, child: proceed!"

"You know the fowls you left me to roast?"

"They are cooked by this time—eh?"

"O yes—and gone too."

"Gone! whither are they gone?"

"Into uncle Thomas's pockets."

"Uncle Thomas! has he been here?"

"And a bottle of that wine," continued Felicité, "which stands in the corner of the cellar next the stairs, and into which we put the logwood and brandy last month, you know."

"The girl's mad! What has all this to do with uncle Thomas?"

"Only that the wine's gone along with the fowls."

During this brief discourse, Felicité cast many knowing looks towards Belle-Rose, who made the most horrible grimaces, with a thousand shakes of the head and warnings of the hands, intended as signs to induce the girl to silence. She, however, mistook them for expressions of gratitude, and persisted in returning all that dumb show with sundry significant winks, while Belle-Rose was determined not to pay for the fowls, whatever might be the result, and Champignon watched the extraordinary pantomime with eyes of the most stupid astonishment, being quite decided in his own mind that their ignorance how to cook some dish was the cause of the whole.

"Why didn't uncle Thomas stay to take some soup with us, Felicité?" inquired the mother, still in a whisper.

"So I dare say he will, if the Gendarmes allow him," was the prompt reply.

"How—speak—girl!"

"Dear uncle! he's amongst those convicts."

"Amongst the convicts!" shrieked the poor woman aloud, to the astonishment of all present, save herself, her daughter, and Belle-Rose.

"Yes—yes," cried Felicité in the same audible tone of voice, forgetful of Belle-Rose's injunction to secrecy, and heedless of the continued signs he was making, like the telegraph on the towers of Saint Sulpice, or the superb dwelling of his Excellency the Minister of Marine, in Paris.

During the confabulation between the mother and daughter which we have so faithfully related, Champignon's ear caught the word *volaille*. We have before stated that he had already made up his mind as to the nature and origin of the said discourse, to which the girl's repeated nods and winks gave an additional air of mystery. He therefore thought it was now high time to interfere; and stepping forward as far as the chains would permit him, for his comrade would not move an inch, he said in a dulcet tone of voice, "*Madame*, I think I can enlighten you relative to the object of your discussion."

"*Pardie!*" exclaimed the landlady; "that's exactly what I want. I and my daughter are talking about a couple of fowls—"

"Ah! ah!" interrupted Champignon with a complacent smile: "I'm at home there!"

"The devil you are! and where are they?"

"I thought—O I find I am—that is," stammered Champignon, with a disconsolate look, "I—I—am a little—mistaken."

"Come—come!" cried the good woman: "no equivocation, my worthy fellow."

"If I be in the wrong, *Madame*," said Champignon meekly, "I am willing to make every apology."

"Apology—apology! The greedy dog!" screamed the infuriate landlady; and rushing upon the gastronome, like a lioness loosened from her cage, she soon left the traces of her nails upon his two cheeks, tore his wig from his head, and broke the bottle of wine in the scuffle. The precious juice drenched Champignon's small-clothes throughout, and ran upon the floor in many meandering streams. This lamentable sight only irritated the already outrageous termagant the more; and God knows how the conflict might have ended with regard to Champignon, had it not been interrupted by the timely aid of the *Gendarmes*.

"Is that the thief, *Felicité*?" shrieked the landlady, pointing to Champignon, when she had partially recovered breath.

"Thief! No—mother: that's the poor man who is condemned for having made pies of dead bodies."

A roar of laughter followed this declaration, while Champignon, stupid with astonishment, rage, and terror, could not find words to justify himself against so awful an accusation.

"In the name of God, explain these mysteries, *Felicité*," cried the exasperated parent, when silence was again established.

"Mother," replied the girl, "I told you uncle Thomas took the fowls, which I gave him; and he is amongst those prisoners."

"Where—where—O where is my poor brother?" whimpered the landlady, her wrath subsiding into tears.

"There!" answered *Felicité*, pointing to *Belle-Rose*.

"That my brother Thomas! that your uncle!" cried the woman in a contemptuous tone of voice. "No—no: Thomas never was such a mannikin as that!"

"He grew a foot and a half shorter in one night, *mamma!*"

"Begone, insolence!" roared the infuriate mother, dealing a

tremendous box on the ears to her daughter, who ran out of the room weeping bitterly.

"You cruel old jade!" cried Belle-Rose, really pitying the unfortunate girl. "I deceived your poor Felicité," continued the convict, "got the roast fowls from her—and ate them—"

"You have eaten two roast fowls to your own share!" thundered the irritated landlady, while the Gendarmes, who held her, did not attempt to restrain their laughter.

"I and that gentleman," returned Belle-Rose, pointing to Champignon, who was more thunderstruck at this second than at the first accusation thus brought against him within a quarter of an hour.

"If that be the case, my good woman, it is useless to grumble," said a Gendarme: "the English have a proverb to the effect 'that the least said, the soonest mended.'"

"That's no consolation for the loss of my fowls," muttered the hag, as the chain moved out of the kitchen, attended by the guard.

"Good day, dear sister," cried Belle-Rose with a laugh: "and never forget brother Thomas. Felicité's kindness has saved me the trouble of changing a Napoleon."

The wrathful landlady's response was wafted to the winds of heaven, unheard, unrecked; and Belle-Rose amused his companions with a recital of the stratagem by which he procured the dainties that had caused so much disturbance. The Gendarmes cared but little for these kinds of freaks on the part of their prisoners; particularly as they were so frequent as to repel almost the possibility of entirely suppressing them. De Rosann ventured a forced laugh at the low cheat; and Champignon made a remark expressive of his wonder that Belle-Rose did not ask Felicité for water-cresses to serve up with the fowl: he moreover added that he had a slight recollection of having read, in his youth, a tale about a country where there were no days, but all nights, as the book itself was called *Arabian Nights*—Arabia being a tract of land bordering on Poland—in which tale there was mention made of a wonderful lamp, and a man's passing himself off as a boy's uncle, or something of the kind: he also remembered that the same country was famous for *ragouts*, and concluded his clear and comprehensive elucidations with an equally plain description of the way to dress those dishes *à la Française*.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PASSPORTS.

It was already eight o'clock in the evening when the chain entered the streets of Verneuil. A tedious day's march, rendered more fatiguing than usual by the muddy state of the roads, and the vacillation of the weather, which had repeatedly changed from storm to sunshine, and from sunshine to storm alternately, as if the whole sway of nature were submitted to the caprice of a woman's mind—the tedious day's march, I say, was terminated at the gates of the

prison wherein the convicts were destined to pass the night. The massive doors were speedily opened by a sulky-looking gaoler, whose stern countenance only relaxed into an expression of civility when the chain had entered the court-yard of the prison, and the Gendarmes had closed the rear.

The convicts were detached from each other, and conducted by twos, or threes, or fours, to different *cachots*, according to the size of those dungeons. Some meagre soup, mouldy bread, parched peas, and cold water, were then distributed amongst them; and the doors of their cells closed upon them for the night.

It happened that De Rosann, Belle-Rose, and Champignon were confined together in the same hole; and they all three congratulated themselves on this circumstance. De Rosann was pleased, because he had become accustomed to the garrulity of his comrade; Belle-Rose was himself delighted that chance had thus thrown them together, as he intended to make use of De Rosann's experience at the *bagne* to farther his own plans of escape; and Champignon preferred being locked up with one, who, having tasted his dishes at the Cadran Rouge, could compliment him upon their excellence.

"But," thought our hero within himself, "how different are these from former times! Instead of domestics to pamper my appetite with a variety of luxuries, a sulky gaoler flings me a morsel of bread, as if I were a dog; damp walls replace the gorgeous curtains that were drawn around me at night: coarse straw supports my aching head, beneath which downy pillows once were laid; rogues, murderers, thieves, are my companions—my associates. Oh! Eloise—Eloise! didst thou now see thy still faithful Alfred!"

A violent flood of tears interrupted those bitter reflections; and Belle-Rose, instead of laughing at that which the other convicts would have called puerile grief, endeavoured with rude consolation to compose the feelings of the unhappy young man.

"Come, my dear De Rosann, don't be chicken-hearted," cried he; "if you will but follow my advice, when we are together at Brest, you shall soon have the *clef des champs** at your disposal. Only half an hour ago, as we were standing in the yard to be unchained, while those cursed Gendarmes levelled their carabines at us, I noticed, amongst a groupe of individuals in prison for want of passports, a person whom I knew at the galleys at Toulon, and who escaped with me."

"Did he recognise you?" inquired Champignon.

"Recognise me! *Parbleu*, did he," returned Belle-Rose emphatically; "he owes me an eternal debt of gratitude."

"Ah! how so? did you cook him a dinner?" asked the curious gastronomer.

"No—but I saved him from the galleys by knocking him on the head, and leaving him for dead," was the reply.

"I have done the same to many a rabbit," said Champignon complacently, "although not for the same purpose."

* Literally, "the key of the country;" metaphorically used for "personal freedom."

“ Well—if you can manage to hold your tongue for a minute, I will tell you how I rendered so essential a service to Auguste Ledoux. You know that he and I escaped from Toulon together; but you do not know that when we got into the open fields, two Gendarmes pursued us on horse-back, *ventre a terre*.* We led them a rare dance amongst the woods, &c., till Auguste could not move another inch. What was to be done? the police-officers were close upon us: only one moment remained for reflection—but that moment was enough for me. I unburdened my mind to Auguste, who, however, did not at all relish my scheme. That was nothing—I knew it was for his good—so I cut short his objections by putting it in practice, and knocking him down with all my force. He lay senseless upon the grass—I rifled his pockets, and turned them inside out; and then ran away as fast as my legs could carry me. It all happened as I foresaw. The Gendarmes wasted their time over Auguste, whom they firmly believed I had murdered and plundered; and when I was well concealed in the wood, they resumed their search after me, intending to take charge of the corpse—as they supposed it to be—on their return. But all their cunning was ineffectual; they passed my hiding-place about a thousand times—and late at night gave up their task to return home. Meantime Auguste had come to himself, and had also betaken to the woods: every thing thus turning out as I anticipated. In the course of the next day we encountered each other—he embraced me as his saviour, and in less than a fortnight we dined together at Verey’s.”

“ And pray what did you have for dinner?” inquired Champignon, in a deliberate tone of voice.

“ *Sacré nom de dieu!* do you think I recollect those kinds of trifles?” answered Belle-Rose. “ But talking of dinners puts me in mind of a certain couple of fowls, which, if you have no objection, *messieurs*, we will divide forthwith.”

By this time De Rosann’s mind was partially composed, and he resolved not to forget in future those principles of philosophical resignation which he had before determined to adopt. Belle-Rose felicitated him with much warmth and apparent sincerity on this happy change. He repeated his arguments on the necessity of maintaining one’s courage in hours of difficulty and distress; he awakened fresh hopes in Alfred’s breast relative to an escape, and insisted on his partaking of the dainties which were so cunningly procured at Pontchartrain.

The few rays of light that struggled against obscurity in the *cachot*, where this festivity took place, were allowed to enter by means of a small square trap, or *guichet*, which had been perforated in the massive door for the express purpose; and as the orb of day gradually descended towards the western horizon, the gloom increased within that dreary dungeon. Presently a total darkness enveloped the three prisoners, just as their savoury meal was concluded; and Champignon—having in vain regretted

* Synonymous with “at full gallop.”

his inability, for want of proper utensils, to hash the remainder of the fowls at the next morning's breakfast—stretched himself to sleep upon the straw: dreaming of kitchens, of saucepans, of viands, and of costly dishes. O that man were as happy in reality as he often is in imagination! Alas! that the dreams of riches make the waking truths of poverty the more severe!

A solemn silence reigned throughout the prison, only interrupted at long intervals by the barking of the gaoler's dog, or the clanking of his keys as he made his occasional rounds; and then the rays of his lanthorn illuminated the *cachot* for a moment as he passed by, and disappeared as suddenly, to leave the inmates of that dungeon plunged in even darker gloom than before. De Rosann and Belle-Rose could not sleep so soon as their companion; but they endeavoured to compose themselves to slumber, and therefore refrained from conversation. The ideas of the former were reflected back to other times, when fortune smiled upon him, and life's prospective joys were sweet—when opulence, friendship, society, and love, were present, to smooth his path through the world, and rob his pillow of anxiety—when the dreams of his youth were not fraught with bitterness, nor his contemplation with care—and when his brow was unclouded, his footstep free, and his bearing proud. He had that morning only, bade a mental adieu to the fairest girl beneath the canopy of heaven—he had seen her pale cheek, her dishevelled hair, and a tear upon that cheek—and he knew that the despair pictured on her angelic countenance, and the glistening tears, were for him. But he mistrusted not her fidelity—he knew her truth was sacred—he could not for an instant doubt the veracity of her noble and enthusiastic mind. Pure as she was beautiful, affectionate as she was pure, ignorant as to the meaning of her love, knowing only that it existed, and that De Rosann was its object, unchanging, unchangeable—Eloise was as free from those feminine vacillations, unworthy caprices, and capability of change, as the seraphim, which, according to Mahommedan mythology, stand around Allah's throne. And when she sighed “Farewell!” to him in his prison—when with agonizing feelings, with a heart almost broken, and with unutterable anguish rending her inmost soul, she was torn away from his last embrace, the night before the fatal morn on which the chain of convicts left Bicêtre—she betrayed that deeply-rooted affection, that permanent love, the ineffable attachment, which no time could change, no number of years obliterate, no circumstance destroy. This De Rosann well knew; and the reflection soothed him in his dungeon.

An hour or more had elapsed since the worthy gastronomer's eyes were temporarily closed against his misfortunes, when suddenly a low voice at the *guichet* called “Belle-Rose! Belle-Rose!”

“Who speaks?” inquired the convict; “was it you, De Rosann?”

“Belle-Rose—my friend—listen!” continued the voice.

“Assuredly it is the ghost of my grandfather,” cried Pierre; “and if so, it would be as well to arouse this lubberly, snoring kitchen-fed glutton, to make mince-meat of him.”

"Nonsense, my dear Belle-Rose," exclaimed the voice; "look towards the *guichet*."

"Nothing is more easy," replied the convict; "but as for seeing any thing, that is quite different."

"Well, well; 'tis I—your friend."

"And who the devil is my friend?"

"Auguste Ledoux, that was," said the voice.

"And what is he now?" asked Belle-Rose.

"Auguste Leblond," was the answer.

"The ship is always the same, I hope, notwithstanding the change of colours," remarked Belle-Rose, coolly.

"Precisely," said the man at the *guichet*.

"But wherefore another name amongst friends?"

"My dear Belle-Rose, I serve a good cause, and you must join me. As a proof of my gratitude towards an old friend, and of my unalterable principles, I am now about to render you a most important service. Who is with you?"

"We are three."

"Who are they?"

"Friends. One is a drunken cook, fast asleep; the other is a young man whom you may trust."

"Is he Alfred de Rosann?" inquired Leblond, hastily.

"The same," replied Belle-Rose, while the youth's heart beat quickly.

"Thank God! then my task is easily and soon done!" exclaimed the mysterious individual at the *guichet*.

"Do you know, Leblond—" began Belle-Rose.

"What?"

"That I begin to think you are talking infernal nonsense," added the convict, coolly.

"Patience—patience, I implore; and you will be convinced of my wish to serve your interests."

"Well, then, I will not interrupt you."

"Of course," said Leblond, in a whisper still, "you do not intend to remain long at Brest?"

"Not longer than you and I did at Toulon," was the significant answer.

"You must escape with De Rosann, my dear Belle-Rose; it is absolutely necessary that you should aid each other."

"It was already my intention," returned Pierre.

"That is as it should be, and all will go on well. Here are two passports for you, signed at the *Prefecture de Police* at Paris, and made out for Brest, St. Malo, or Havre-de-grace;" and with these words Leblond threw a paper parcel into the *cachot*.

"*Mille tonnières!*" exclaimed Belle-Rose, in the greatest possible astonishment; "how did you procure these documents?"

"That must remain a mystery. To-morrow morning, when you read them by daylight, the correctness of their contents will prove the truth of what I have already affirmed relative to my wish and power to serve you: it will moreover help to convince you of the necessity of following the line of conduct I shall now chalk out."

"But we shall be searched at Brest," interrupted Belle-Rose, mournfully, "and our passports will be taken from us."

"All that is guarded against," said Leblond, somewhat impatiently. "You will each put your passport in your left hand breast pocket: when the hardy turnkey at the *bagne* is examining you, whisper in his ear the words '*La France!*' and he will not touch that pocket. The same turnkey, whose name is Plombier, will aid your escape, which, when effected, must be directed to an useful purpose. So soon as you are free, proceed—separately or together, it is the same thing—to one of the towns for which your passports are signed, and cause them to be countersigned for Paris; then push boldly forward towards the capital. On your arrival, hasten to the *Rue de la Chanoinesse*, in the Island of the City, close by the cathedral of Notre-Dame, and at Number —, inquire for me by the name of Auguste Leblond."

"And to what is all that to lead?" asked Belle-Rose.

"To raise your fallen fortunes," was the reply; "and," he added, with a peculiar emphasis, "to restore to wealth, honour, rank, and love, those who have been harshly dealt with."

The words went like balm to the heart of De Rosann.

"I left Paris this morning at day-break," continued Leblond, hastily; "my object was to fall in with Alfred de Rosann and Pierre Belle-Rose. I arrived at this town, purposely boasted at a public-house that I had no passport, was arrested, and, as I anticipated, was brought to prison. Now that my task is completed, I shall produce my papers to-morrow morning, say that I thought I had left them behind the day before, and thus procure my liberty."

"But how are you free to walk about the prison at your discretion?" asked Belle-Rose, scarcely knowing what to think of all that Leblond had told him.

"Only felons are locked up," replied the singular individual, whose behaviour was so deeply enveloped in mystery. "But I must now retire: good night—and remember the magic words '*La France!*'"

Belle-Rose would have interrogated him farther; but the sounds of retreating steps showed that Leblond had withdrawn from the *guichet*. Some minutes elapsed before either he or De Rosann opened his lips. At length Belle-Rose broke the silence.

"Ledoux, or Leblond, or whatever his name may be, is one of three things," said he.

"Which are they?" asked De Rosann.

"He is either an infernal liar—an arrant madman—or a deuced clever fellow."

"There was too much system in all he said, besides the uselessness of deceiving us," said Alfred, "to make me think him a madman or a liar; but to-morrow morning will prove beyond a doubt the truth or falsity of his assertions."

"Yes; and in the meantime let us search for the passports," returned Belle-Rose. "I have them," he added, in about a minute; "pray to God, De Rosann—if thou can'st pray—that they may be genuine! And if they be, then is Leblond's power great indeed; for I am almost certain that Prince Polignac

himself could scarcely procure such documents from the *Prefecture de Police*."

"Till to-morrow, then, lay aside all conjecture ; and endeavour to snatch a few hours of repose," cried our hero.

"Good night, De Rosann ; and, once more—may fortune favour our undertakings !" rejoined Belle-Rose.

"Amen !"

And the *cachot* was wrapt in silence.

It was not until a very late hour that De Rosann sank into an uneasy slumber ; but he awoke early the following morning, refreshed and comparatively in good spirits. He recalled his scattered ideas, and endeavoured to separate the real from the imaginary. Amongst the latter was for a moment ranked every thing connected with Leblond, till a little mature reflection assured him of the truth of that individual's appearance at the *guichet*, and brought to his mind the substance of what he had said. Belle-Rose soon awoke, and the passports were speedily produced, while Champignon still remained locked in the embraces of Sleep. The anxious eyes of the two prisoners greedily sought the contents of the papers ; and their hearts leapt within them as they noticed in the dim twilight that these documents were really genuine ! The very descriptions of their persons were correct to a nicety ; and on the back was the regular endorsement and the red stamp of the *Prefecture de Police*. The names alone were changed ; De Rosann was thenceforth to be called Jules de Remonville—and Belle-Rose, Henri Mercier. We shall, however, continue to designate them by their real appellations, to prevent confusion in the progress of our tale.

Scarcely had De Rosann and Belle-Rose congratulated themselves on the genuineness of their papers, and consequently on the unlimited confidence to be now attached to Leblond's assertions, when Champignon began to give evident signs of an inclination to shake off his slumbers, by yawning, and stretching out his arms in a most uncereemonious manner. The sun had not yet risen ; and the twilight entered but partially into the narrow cell, barely sufficient to allow Alfred and his comrade to peruse their passports a few minutes before Champignon awoke. The gastronomer inquired what o'clock it was ; and on being told that in a quarter of an hour the Gendarmes would call them to renew their march, he declared his intention of rising and washing himself.

"As for rising," said Belle-Rose, "that is not very difficult, seeing you have no bed-clothes to kick off ; but as for washing yourself, otherwise than at the pump, when the gaoler opens the doors, you need not flatter yourself you will have the opportunity."

"I beg your pardon," returned Champignon, gently ; "may I never spit another partridge if there be not a species of wooden trough or ewer in this corner."

"Ah ! there really is something," remarked Belle-Rose, carelessly.

"'Tis as I tell you," muttered Champignon ; and he reached forward his hand to grasp the utensil, when the machine snapped

with a rattle, and the gastronomer gave a terrible cry, as if he were bitten by a serpent.

"*Diable!*" exclaimed Belle-Rose: "what's the matter now?"

"My hand! my hand!" yelled Champignon.

"As I am a living being he has caught his arm in a rat-trap," said De Rosann, hastening to disengage the *ex-restaurateur's* member from so ignoble a jeopardy.

"Thank God!" ejaculated Champignon, when he had regained the free exercise of his hand; "these digits were meant to pluck partridges and pigeons, and not to be caught in rat-traps. A man may as soon think of finding a *poulet truffé* on a ploughman's table, as a wash-hand-stand in a *cachot*."

"When you leave the galleys, Champignon, you must give lectures on gastronomy," said Belle-Rose.

"You are laughing at me, my friend; but I would wager a mess of *pieds de mouton* against a plate of *soupe maigre* that you do not know how many different dishes there are in the French kitchen—that is, in how many different ways you may dress veal, beef, mutton, pork, game, poultry, fish, and eggs."

"Fifty, I suppose," returned Pierre, carelessly.

"Three hundred and sixty-five!" cried Champignon, in a tone of triumph.

"And your *cotelettes à la quadrille* form the three hundred and sixty-sixth," added Belle-Rose.

The arrival of the gaoler to unlock the dungeon-door put an end to this colloquy, much to the regret of Champignon, who was about to commence a long harangue on the excellence of his new discovery, and the importance of it to the culinary world. Through the aid of some money which Belle-Rose produced from the purse he had obtained at Versailles, a comfortable breakfast was procured for the three prisoners by the avaricious gaoler, whose countenance wore a smile or a frown according to the means of those in his custody. De Rosann ate but little: Leblond's timely assistance and mysterious aid had effected so deep an impression on his mind, and had awakened such a variety of conflicting ideas in his bosom, that resignation and patience had totally given way to wild and burning hope. This was not the case with Belle-Rose: much as he was rejoiced at the felicitous interference of Leblond, and aware as he was of the importance of the service rendered by him, without which no escape could ever have been rendered effectual,—he still regarded all things with his usual imperturbable coolness and serenity of disposition; while Champignon fell tooth and nail upon the provisions supplied by the gaoler, muttering between his teeth an almost inaudible regret that the *fricandeau de veau* had not been served up with *oseille*.*

When this meal was concluded, the convicts were summoned, one and all, to the court-yard, where pump-water was at the disposal of those who were anxious to perform their ablutions ere their departure—an opportunity of cleanliness that none rejected. Belle-Rose looked around to catch a glimpse of Auguste Leblond, but

ne was not there ; and Pierre dared not excite suspicion by inquiring of the gaoler if he had been liberated.

The clanking chains were once more attached to the convicts as before ; and the squadron speedily resumed its march, under the escort of another detachment of Gendarmes.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ARRIVAL.

It would be encroaching on the reader's time and patience, minutely to detail every event that occurred during the march of the convicts. Suffice it to say, that Belle-Rose played his usual tricks in the various public-houses at which they stopped ; that De Rosann kept up his spirits with sanguine hope ; and that Champignon vaunted his gastronomical acquirements whenever an opportunity presented itself. The other convicts amused themselves with licentious conversation, and wiled away the tedious hours with ribald songs, or disgusting anecdotes of immorality and misdeed ; and not unfrequently did they disguise their meaning in a certain slang, called *argot*, which is a common language at the *bagne*, but is altogether unintelligible to those who are not initiated in the mysteries of that school. We will not, however, inflict any of it upon the reader : on the contrary, we will pass over the remainder of the journey in silence, and resume our narrative at the moment when the massive gates of the prison at Brest closed upon the chain, which was now arrived at the place of its destination.

It must not be thought, however, that the galleys of France resemble the hulks at Portsmouth or Plymouth : years have passed away since the convicts dwelt in ships at Toulon, Brest, and Rochefort ; and spacious prisons, built near the harbours, have become the receptacles of those who still bear the name of galley-slaves. In courts of justice the words *galeres* and *galeriens* are now used but seldom ; they are almost obsolete in the mouths of the *Procureurs du Roi* ; and *travaux forces* and *forçats* have replaced them.

The town clock had struck five in the afternoon of the 5th of May, when the chain entered the *bagne* of Brest ; and a strict personal examination instantly commenced. One by one the convicts were submitted to the scrutiny of an old man in a little office or *cabinet*. There they were stripped to the skin, and not a crevice of their garments escaped the most minute investigation. When this ceremony was accomplished, they were conducted to the baths, and thence each to a *cachot* for the night ; and on the following morning they were supplied with new suits of clothes, their own being taken away to give place to garments made of cloth of two different colours.

Belle-Rose entered the cabinet before De Rosann, and was instantly requested by the old man to divest himself of his apparel.

"Since you are determined to see me like Adam," said the facetious Pierre, "I must e'en obey : there is my jacket."

"You have no files—no watch-springs—concealed herein?" en-

quired the old man, while he plunged his hands into the pockets with a care that showed the little reliance he meant to place on the answer which the convict was certain to return to his question.

"No—but I have an important document in my possession, and I suppose the law does not authorize you to take it away from me."

"*Nous verrons*," returned the old man, fishing out the paper, and putting on his spectacles to examine it. "'Tis a good and genuine passport, my lad," he added, casting a searching glance at Belle-Rose; "marked with the regular stamp—duly signed—and endorsed. And the personal description too," he continued leisurely, "what says that? Age—figure—hair, *dark*—forehead, *high*—eyebrows, *black*—nose—mouth—chin—eh! eh! all right to a nicety: and the name, *Henri Mercier*.—My good fellow," said the old man abruptly, "how came you by this passport?"

"My days are devoted to the service of *La France*," replied Belle-Rose boldly, but with a partial anxiety; for his future fate depended upon the veracity of Leblond's mysterious statements—and that veracity was now put to a certain proof. He felt like a man standing on the verge of a vast precipice, with an avalanche above his head, and a torrent beneath his feet—expecting succour, and yet aware of the possibility, or even the probability of its failure. It was the most important moment of his life—and he knew it to be such. The old man hesitated—gazed at the passport, then at Belle-Rose, then at the passport again; and, perhaps fearful that hazard alone might have dictated the convict's reply—or perhaps to make doubly sure—he seemed to wait for him to say something more.

Belle-Rose's heart sank within him;—he feared it was all over—that Leblond had deceived him—that his sanguine anticipations were vain. But he resolved to be convinced at once; and therefore, without mystery or disguise, fixing a penetrating glance upon the old man, and drawing himself up to his full height, to throw as much importance as possible into his attitude, he pronounced in a firm tone the words "*LA FRANCE*."

"I understand you—'tis well," muttered Plombier: "the examination is finished. You will keep that document," he added, returning the passport to the hand of Belle-Rose, "until an opportunity shall render it useful to you."

"And when may that be?" enquired Belle-Rose, delighted at the turn which the mysterious affair had taken.

"As speedily as possible. You may rely upon my aid."

"You are yourself, then, enlisted in the service?"

"In what service?" enquired Plombier, feigning astonishment.

"In *some* service, evidently," returned Belle-Rose.

"My friend," said the old man, in a firm but kind tone, "do not seek to penetrate mysteries as yet unveiled but to few. It is true I am in a certain service—and you must embrace the same: but perhaps you may never know by whom, nor for what, you will have been employed. The mighty source of a thousand intrigues, in comparison with which the circumstances of your adventure are nothing," continued Plombier solemnly, "remains concealed from our eyes; and God only knows for what purposes we are reserved.



Portrait of the Author

One thing is, however, certain, that those who are faithful and diligent in an unknown cause, are well remunerated; and promises alone are not all the bait that is held out. Be secret, therefore, and wary; a single word to your comrades—and you never quit these walls alive. I tremble and am astonished at the same time, when I reflect on the vastness of that invisible power, which can watch over and control you, me, and thousands of others, and which yet appears to be an airy nothing, although vested with so terrible a reality of might and capacity.”

“May I not enquire—”

“Nay—no more,” interrupted Plombier, gently: “I am nearly as ignorant as yourself; ’tis an extensive free-masonry, which time will probably develop.—Adieu—and when you meet me in the *bagne*, whither my duties often lead me, take no notice of me.”

Belle-Rose would have questioned the old man farther; but that venerable personage took him by the shoulders and gently pushed him out of the cabinet, whither De Rosann was almost immediately summoned to undergo the usual investigation. We need scarcely detail what passed between him and Plombier: suffice it to say, that Alfred presently issued from the office with a smile of satisfaction on his countenance, and a ray of hope illuminating his breast.

Champignon was ushered into the little cabinet after De Rosann, and finding himself confronted by an ill-looking old man, he began to tremble, fearful of being in the presence of the public executioner. His face became as pale as death, his legs tottered under him, and his teeth chattered as if he were enveloped in ice.

Plombier stared at this comical figure in astonishment, while Champignon fancied his last hour was come.

“Well, my fine fellow—why do you not undress yourself?”

“Undress myself! Good God—what have I done?” cried the wretched man, a cold sweat gathering on his forehead.

“You know best, I suppose,” returned Plombier. “One thing is very certain: that you were not sent hither on account of your innocence.”

“Alas! alas! *Monsieur le Bourreau*,”* cried Champignon, “spare me—spare me—for the love of God, spare me!”

“Who the devil wants to touch you?” said the old man, quivering with indignation at having been taken for the public functionary of the *guillotine*. “Make haste, and disencumber yourself of these clothes, that I may dispatch you as speedily as possible.”

“Dispatch me!—and so soon, too!” murmured Champignon, in a piteous tone of voice; “you could not kill the best cook in France before he has said his prayers! Oh, no!—I’m sure you could not: therefore, mercy!—mercy!”

“I kill you, idiot!” thundered Plombier, stamping his foot upon the floor with rage: “what put such a ridiculous idea into your ass’s head, I wonder? Get up, and let me examine your clothes, you unsaintly coward—you worthless thief!”

“Oh! oh!” whispered the gastronome, “then you are not going to kill me?”

* *Bourreau*, Executioner.

"No! idle fool. Undress yourself, or I will call the Gendarmes to tear your garments shred by shred from your vile body."

"Spit me before the fire—grill me on a gridiron—truss me like a capon—but spare my life, at least till I have made known to the world my *cotelettes a la quadrille*!"

"*Sacre mille tonnerres!*" roared the irritated old man: "the villain wishes me to dance a *quadrille* at my time of life; but, by the eternal God! I will make him caper to a pretty tune, if he do not instantly submit his unholy carcase to the investigation!"

"I am at your mercy," said Champignon, resignedly. "Speak --what would you have me do?"

"Take off your clothes as quickly as possible."

The gastronome obeyed with a piteous face, and Plombier soon terminated his scrutiny: he accordingly motioned Champignon to resume his apparel; but the sign was misunderstood, and the *ex-restaurateur* of the Cadran Rouge, bewildered and confused, and almost unconscious of what he was doing, opened the door of the cabinet, and appeared amongst the Gendarmes, and the rest of the convicts who waited to pass their examination, in his shirt. The step was rather higher than he fancied it to be; and in descending it too hastily, his foot slipped, and down he fell. An immense dog, that hitherto lay reposing in his kennel at the farther end of the yard, was aroused and alarmed at the sudden apparition of a being in so unseemly a guise; and rushing from his den, he flew upon the unfortunate gastronome's back in the twinkling of an eye; but before he could do any essential mischief, a Gendarme promptly interfered, and succeeded in withdrawing the animal, while the discomfited Champignon arose amidst shouts of laughter, declaring "it was the first time in his life he had ever been taken for a *cotelette en papillote*."

On the following morning the prison garb was distributed to each of the convicts who had entered the day before; and their names were worked in full length upon their caps, with a supernumerary distinction emphatically expressed by the letters G A L*. Thus the ceremony of examination by the old man on the arrival of the chain was not useless, as it might have at first appeared to the reader, whose wonder was very naturally excited at the apparent folly of causing so much trouble, instead of dealing out a change of habiliments at once; whereas the clothes were necessarily kept back for a night, in order to be distinguished by the nomenclatures of those who were destined to wear them. Belle-Rose and De Rosann retained their passports untouched, as Plombier had assured them would be the case; and their delight at this circumstance was only equalled by their curiosity to become acquainted with the nature, the source, and the extent of a power which displayed itself in so remarkable a manner, and yet remained concealed from every eye. It was evident that the agents knew no more of the motives of their employment, than the King's messenger is aware of the contents of the dispatches which he bears from his sovereign's court to a foreign monarch. Those agents

* *Galerien*, galley-slave.

worked for a purpose into whose mysteries they could not penetrate ; they laboured to accomplish ends carefully concealed from their view. Thus was it impossible to betray the site of the mighty fountain whence issued a thousand streams ; thus were the invisible promoters of vast designs enabled to enlist the infamous as well as the virtuous in their service, and secure the eventual success of their enterprises by the cunning of those whose experience was not obtained in the paths of honour, but in the schools of vice.

But if De Rosann were disgusted with the licentious discourse and loose anecdotes of his companions on their march from Paris to Brest, how much more had he reason to shudder at the behaviour, the principles, and the language of those whom he found at the *bagne*. One related with the utmost coolness a tale of horror and assassination, in which he himself had been engaged, and for which he was condemned ; another swore that the first use he should make of his freedom, would be to cut the throat of the person who delivered him into the hands of justice ; a third declared that, if he had murdered his own father, it was because he had had no inducement to be a dutiful son ; a fourth boasted of having robbed his unsuspecting master during a period of twelve years, which at last brought on the ruin of the respectable merchant whom he served, and to whom he was indebted for his bread ; a fifth deplored his folly in not having blown out an aged grandfather's brains, when he made the old man sign away his last farthing by placing a pistol to his ear, and terrifying him with the most dreadful menaces ; and a sixth cursed the venerable priest who had interrupted him during a sacrilegious attempt to rob a village church.

Such—for we dare quote no more—is a small sample of the conversation, the ideas, and the thoughts of those wretches with whom De Rosann was forced to associate. And, to add to his internal grief, he dared not manifest his disgust : he was obliged to conceal it all in his lacerated breast. He was compelled to join in the boisterous laugh—to listen to the ribald song—to applaud the licentious joke—to smile at anecdotes of blood, of lust, of incest, and of terror—and to maintain, as well as he was able, a joyous countenance amongst murderers and thieves. But all that he heard and saw, he witnessed with loathing, and regarded it as an example teaching him to retain the natural purity of his sentiments, and to avoid the slightest step that might lead to the abyss wherein the wretches around him had fallen. Had he been gradually drawn on from one degree of vice and dissipation to another, and initiated in the school of turpitude and debauchery step by step, the weakness of humanity might have been triumphed over, and his soul might have eventually succumbed to temptation. But he was precipitated suddenly and headlong from a high estate to a predicament of horror ; and the alarming contrast instantly made a deep impression upon his mind—an impression so indelibly stamped, that nothing less powerful than the waters of oblivion could have washed it away.

Belle-Rose mingled fearlessly with the members of the *bagne*, and instantly became a great favourite, on account of his naturally lively disposition, his garrulity, and the perpetual good humour

which marked his countenance. He moreover recognised amongst the convicts several of his ancient associates, and soon made acquaintance with others ; for it is not in the criminal gaols that the ceremony of introduction, observed by the world without, is very prevalent. Still his soul was not so deeply tainted as that of many of his comrades : there was no species of swindling, chicanery, nor dishonesty that Belle-Rose was not capable of ; but he would have shrunk from spilling blood with the same horror as would a purely virtuous man. He affected no false sanctity ; he merely said, in his own peculiar style of jocularity, "That so long as there were widows to be duped, minors to be fleeced, and tradesmen to give credit, he did not see the use of cutting a man's throat to procure a purse ; and that for his part he never had a very high opinion of the cunning of the individual, who preferred scouring the highways at night, to living on his wits within the walls of Paris."

Where all are bad, and where it is nevertheless necessary to make choice of an associate, both for the purpose of concocting plans to further an escape, and to avoid an appearance of selfishness and constraint, we must choose the best. Therefore, even if circumstances had not particularly linked the present interests of Belle-Rose and De Rosann together, it is more than probable that our hero would have selected Pierre as his intimate companion and chum. Neither Belle-Rose, De Rosann, nor Champignon had been branded at Paris, as was customary with criminals found guilty of enormous crimes ; and they were the only three, out of the fifty or sixty convicts that accompanied them from Bicêtre, who had escaped this mark of eternal degradation.

As for poor Champignon, he soon became the butt of his companions ; but he bore all their jokes with the greatest good humour, never suspecting that he was singled out as the sole object of their practical jocularities. At night-time he amused himself with a thousand wild schemes, which he communicated to the others in the morning ; and they with serious faces applauded his plans. Amongst these numerous devices, was one for the formation of a joint-stock company, or *société en commandite*, in order to make known to the world his *cotelettes à la quadrille*, for which he intended to take out a patent, and to establish a *restaurant*, where they could be served up in every principal town of France. The capital was fixed at six hundred thousand francs ;* and the institution was to be called "*Société pour l'exploitation des cotelettes à la quadrille, sous la Raison Sociale de Champignon et Cie.*" The convicts declared this to be a most promising undertaking ; and begged he would allow them to have the refusal of the first shares. The gastronome thanked them with tears in his eyes, forgetting that scarcely one of his promised supporters was blessed with a *sou*, and began racking his brains for suitable language in which "to dress up a *prospectus*."

Shortly after the arrival of the prisoners at the *bagne*, the Commissary or Governor definitively divided them into couples, and every couple was attached together by a long chain fastened to

* Twenty-four thousand pounds, sterling.

the ankle of each individual. Fortunately for the execution of their designs, and the fulfilment of the mystic promises of Leblond, De Rosann and Belle-Rose were again suffered to be chained together ; and thus during the toils to which their condemnation compelled them to submit, were they enabled to discuss schemes and methods of escape. The result of these deliberations was, however, anticipated by an accident which seemed singularly well adapted to favour the wishes of the two convicts. The circumstances alluded to will be faithfully detailed in their places : at present we must for a moment stop the thread of our narrative to lay before the reader an episode which, although it may at first appear entirely unconnected with the tale, is nevertheless too important to be omitted.

CHAPTER IX.

FRANÇOIS.

IN one of the strong rooms of the prison at Brest, encumbered with massive chains, and awaiting the arrival of Gendarmes to lead him forth to the place of execution, lay an old man, who had numbered at least sixty summers, and who had languished at the galleys more than half that period. His hair was white as snow ; but his fiery eye and keen glance had not suffered through the ravages of time. There was something repulsive in his looks and in his manners—a ferocity, a coarseness that restrained the slightest advance at familiarity. The story of his condemnation to the galleys, as he had often told it to his comrades, was as follows :—

“ It was in the year V of the Republic, on the 2nd of Thermidor—I recollect it as if it were yesterday—a stranger entered my humble shop in the Rue Grenelle St. Honoré, in Paris, and enquired if I had apartments to let. He had been attracted by the placard outside the door stating that a portion of my house was thus to be disposed of. I answered in the affirmative—he examined the two rooms that were free, and appeared satisfied with them. He enquired the amount of rent ; I demanded a somewhat high price, expecting to be beaten down ; but he acquiesced in the almost exorbitant charge, and was speedily installed in his new lodgings. He did not stir out till late at night ; and then he remained some time absent. At length he returned, accompanied by an individual bearing a portmanteau of an uncommon weight, if I might judge by the way he staggered under the heavy load. This was my lodger’s servant ; and from that moment he took up his quarters with his master ; there being a bed in each room. The Marquis de Denneville—for such was his rank and name—made a confidant of me, and threw himself entirely on my mercy. It appeared that a price was set upon his head—that since the overthrow of the Bourbon dynasty he had hitherto remained concealed in England—and that he had at length returned to his ‘ unfortunate country,’ as he called it, to endeavour to influence a powerful relative in his behalf. This last

resource had failed—his relative had proved himself a faithless friend— and temporary concealment for the Marquis de Denneville was necessary, until he could find an opportunity of reaching Calais and passing over to England. All he had succeeded in doing was to realize a considerable portion of his former property, the whole of which had not been confiscated ; and the proceeds, in gold and bank-notes, were in the portmanteau that Gustave, his faithful adherent, brought to the house. ‘I have a child—an only child,’ said the Marquis ; ‘and God knows what may become of me ! Her mother is dead ; and, although she be with kind friends, still must I look to her interests. This money will be useful to her in after-life—when I shall be no more !’—and tears moistened the old nobleman’s cheek, as he uttered these words.—About a month passed away, and Gustave died of a sudden attack of apoplexy. The grief of the Marquis at this unfortunate event cannot be conceived ; and his embarrassment was greater than his sorrow ; for the faithful domestic had intended to undertake a journey to one of the western frontier towns, in order to secure a safe passage for his master across the channel. It was now that an infernal idea entered my head ; the treasure of the Marquis haunted me perpetually, beset me during the day, and followed me in my dreams ; my imagination was continually forming brilliant plans for the future—I saw myself surrounded by domestics—I heard the noise of my carriage, as it rolled up to my door ; in fine, I thought of nothing but that treasure, and the means of possessing it. I could not work ; my meals were nauseous to my taste ; I looked with disgust on every thing save the fatal portmanteau ; and at last, in a species of mental phrenzy, I resolved upon doing the accursed deed.”

Here the old man invariably stopped for a moment, drew breath, wiped his eyes and his brow, and then proceeded with the tale of horror that had stamped untimely wrinkles on his forehead.

“No sooner was my mind made up to perpetrate a terrible action, than I felt easier ; and one fatal night—the rain beat in pitiless torrents against the window—not a single star varied the gloom of the dark canopy above—the wind howled in the narrow street, in dismal chorus to the whisperings of my conscience—all nature seemed at war—I left my lonely couch, armed myself with a deadly weapon, and proceeded to the chamber of the Marquis. The venerable noble slept ; there reposed one of France’s ancient peers—the aristocracy of the old *regime*—a pillar of the murdered Louis’s mighty throne ! I paused to dwell a moment on his unruffled features—his mild countenance ; then, banishing all commiseration from my ruthless soul, I stabbed him to the heart. He uttered not a groan—a slight convulsion passed through his frame—and in an instant he was no more !”

It was the old man’s custom to pause again, when he arrived at this crisis ; he then concluded in the following terms :—

“But my villany was well rewarded. I opened the portmanteau, and sought in vain for the gold—it had disappeared. A bundle of papers alone met my eyes. Although I could not read—for my education had been more than neglected—I knew that they were neither bank-notes, nor bills of exchange to procure money upon : they were

most probably family documents. My rage and horror, singularly blended together, knew no bounds ; I had committed an enormous crime, and had reaped no benefit ; my soul was stained with blood, and the bait that had allured me to so dreadful a deed, had eluded my grasp. In vain I searched the apartments—the murdered man's person—the bed-linen—all was to no purpose ; the money was not there. What could he have done with it ? I recollected that Gustave occasionally went out late at night ; perhaps he had despatched the treasure to another land. Vain and useless conjectures ! for there was one glaring, damning truth ever present to my faithful memory—a truth which no argument could controvert—that I had deprived an excellent and generous being of his life ! I scarcely knew what I was doing, nor what was to be done. To remain there with the body was impossible ; to dispose of it for any length of time was equally difficult. In my desperation I resolved to fly from the hated spot. I accordingly rifled the pockets of the deceased, took what little money I myself possessed, and—God knows why—putting the Marquis's papers in my pocket, perhaps with a distant hope that on examination by a person who could read, and to whom I could entrust my secret, something might be developed by them—I left Paris, and took the road to St. Malo, intending to embark for Guernsey, and thence seek the shores of England. I halted within a few miles of the town, and obtained a night's lodging in a farm-house situate at a little distance from the main-road. Having carefully concealed the Marquis's documents in an old cupboard that stood near the chimney of the room to which I was shown, I lay down to rest : but no sleep visited my eyes—horrible ideas oppressed me—and the ghost of the murdered man seemed to haunt my bed-side. In the morning I was arrested ; the police had followed on my track but too well—and I was conveyed to gaol. Despite of my unceasing declarations of innocence, I was found guilty, and condemned to the galleys for life. As for the papers I left behind me at the farm-house, I never mentioned their existence to the Gendarmes, determined that, if those documents *did* contain information which might lead to an important discovery, no one should enjoy the benefit of wealth that I had lost, through any disclosure from my lips. It is however more than probable that the farmer found them, saw that they were useless, and destroyed them.”

Such was the horrible tale which François—for the old man was generally known by this name—had often told his companions ; and so far as it could be ratified by the proceedings before the tribunal that condemned him, it was perfectly correct. With regard to the rest, no one could attest its veracity, nor prove its falsity. But let us hasten to inform our readers wherefore François is now in the strong-room of the prison, and why he is under sentence of death in a place at which he had been already doomed to pass the remainder of his miserable existence.

About six months before the arrival of De Rosann, Belle-Rose, Champignon, and their comrades, a youth of fifteen was sent to the galleys for a period of five years. His character was the most depraved that can be conceived ; he had participated in many daring robberies ; and, after having been repeatedly pardoned and admon-

ished by humane magistrates, he was at last found to be incorrigible, and the law was allowed to have its usual course. But the old François took pity upon the tender years of Edouard—so the young prisoner was named—and behaved to him with even parental kindness. Occasionally the turnkeys, in consideration of the length of time that François had been at the *bagne*, slyly ameliorated his usually coarse meal, and gave him fruits, cold meats, half a bottle of wine, or some little luxury of the kind. These additions to the ordinary fare were always transferred to Edouard—and the old man experienced a secret pleasure in thus alleviating the miseries of a being that nevertheless was nought to him. If Edouard were ill during the night, François invariably attended upon him, gave him water, arranged his straw pillow, and supported his aching head. And yet the youth was not grateful for his disinterested conduct; he was often rude and abrupt in his replies to the old man's questions, and not unfrequently made him the butt of his low jests. Still François loved the worthless boy, and entertained a father's affection for him. It was singular such tenderness in such a heart—in the heart of a murderer; but perhaps François was rejoiced at knowing one individual in the world, whom he could single out and say, "There is the only being on earth that I care for!"

Months rolled away; and Edouard became daily more brutal and reserved towards his benefactor, as François' kindness to him increased. Often did this ingratitude strike to the heart of the poor old man; and then he would say within himself, "All my sufferings in the world are a punishment for the crime I committed in my youth; if my soul become attached to a fellow-creature, the divine wrath uses that feebleness as a weapon against me."

One day Edouard had offended another convict, and he received a severe blow. François reproached the man, that had beaten the youth, with his cowardice in striking a person unable to defend himself, and whose strength had not yet become matured by years. A dispute ensued, and an inspector of the *bagne*—a man endowed with considerable authority—interfered. "Edouard has well merited his punishment," said he; "he is the most turbulent and troublesome convict in this department of the gaol; he receives all your kindness, François, with the basest ingratitude, and is perpetually creating some disturbance. The next time he misconducts himself, I shall transfer him to another quarter of the prison, where indulgence is more circumscribed, and work more abundant." With these words the inspector passed on—Edouard turned aside—and François muttered audible curses against the authority that had thus interfered in a private quarrel.

That night, five minutes before the convicts were ordered to their quarters, and during the interval when their chains were taken off for the purpose of affording a brief relaxation, the inspector was found murdered in the yard!

Suspicion fell upon Edouard and François; they were instantly arrested and confined in separate dungeons. The handle of a knife was discovered in François' pocket—the blade had broken against the ribs of the deceased. Our readers must be informed that the inmates of the *bagne* are not permitted to have knives; the query

now arose, "Whence had François procured the one in question?" A turnkey confessed he had lent it to him that very afternoon, since the dispute had taken place. Thus circumstantial evidence was strong against the unhappy old man.

But the conduct of Edouard excited universal disgust, even in minds long inured to treachery and crime. He declared at his examination, that François had imparted to him his intention of being revenged on the inspector, two hours before the murder was discovered, and had endeavoured to persuade him to assist in the nefarious design; that he had positively refused; and that he was himself astonished at François carrying his resentment to such a frightful pitch. Edouard moreover begged that particular attention might be paid to the evidence of the convict who had been the original cause of the dispute, and to that of a sentry present during the quarrel, by which testimony it was fully proven that François had uttered many threats, and those without the slightest reserve, the moment the inspector was beyond ear-shot. The Commissary and other authorities, who presided at this examination, were considerably struck by the force of these arguments; and François was accordingly handed over to the jurisdiction of the criminal judge of the district, at whose hands he did not experience a long delay ere his doom was pronounced. And that doom was death! It was moreover decreed that in order to present the other convicts with a striking example, the execution should take place in the prison itself.

It was about a fortnight after the entrance of De Rosann and his companions, that this sentence was made known, with the additional certitude of its being put into force within four and twenty hours. Edouard was set at liberty; but not a soul spoke to him; he was shunned by the most degraded as well as by the most scrupulous. Even in the eyes of murderers his conduct appeared monstrous; when contemplated by polluted imaginations and blood-thirsty minds, his behaviour had an aspect of something inhuman. In what light, then, must it appear to the virtuous reader?

The news of François' condemnation to death, and the various collateral circumstances attending it, filled the whole of the *bagne* with sorrow, and diffused an unusual gloom around. Audible curses were muttered against Edouard—many gave him a blow as they passed—and at night he was under the necessity of feigning indisposition, as an excuse for sleeping at the hospital, apart from his usual companions, of whose taunts and reproaches he was dreadfully afraid.

At length the fatal morning dawned; and, when De Rosann arose, he saw the *guillotine* erected in the spacious court-yard below. With an involuntary shudder he pointed it out to Belle-Rose; the others soon gathered at the windows; and all gazed in silence upon the accursed instrument. At that moment the first rays of the rising sun pierced through the dispersing mists, and fell upon the glittering knife which was hung between the tall spars, at their summits. Those spars were about one foot and three quarters asunder; between them was soon to pass a living being; thence would be withdrawn a headless corpse! The beams of the orb of day appeared to play upon the destructive mechanism as if in

mockery of the sorrows of him whose life was speedily to pass away beneath it. At first the sharp and heavy iron had hung aloft as an obscure and dark thing; but when its terrors were revealed and rendered palpable by that abrupt emanation of light, an universal groan issued from the breasts of those who beheld it. De Rosann turned away from the barred window in unutterable horror; Belle-Rose muttered an anathema of some emphasis against the ungrateful Edouard; and Champignon made so frightful a face, that, had any attention been paid to it, an observer would have fancied he was under the influence of a sudden strangulation. But luckily no one took notice of his contortions; and he sat down to ponder for the first time in his life on something unconnected with cookery.

Presently the roll of drums, and the march of soldiers, called De Rosann and his companions once more to the windows. A strong military force, with loaded muskets, and fixed bayonets, guarded every avenue of the extensive prison, and surrounded the square, in the midst of which the *guillotine* was erected. But it was easy to discern by their countenances, that there was not a warrior amongst the martial throng, whose heart was not softened at the melancholy tragedy about to be enacted. Heroes that have bled at Wagram, Austerlitz, Jena, and Arcole, and that have trampled upon conquered thousands beneath the banners of Napoleon, can still drop a tear at the sight of a fellow-creature's sufferings!

No sooner had the soldiers taken up their station as described, than the convicts were chained in couples as a precautionary measure against the inclination to create a tumult, which invariably possesses a lawless multitude on such occasions, and were then conducted to the large square to be spectators of François' execution; while Edouard, whose excuses could not totally overcome the sagacity of the prison-doctor, was himself doomed to witness a sight of which he was the cause. As he had just left the hospital he was not shackled; and, as if his evil genius were determined to torment him, or rather to place temptation to fresh crimes in his way, as will appear by the result, he found himself in the front rank nearest the *guillotine*. When he was perceived by his immediate neighbours, a repetition of the previous day's reproaches and gibes commenced; but an order from one of the inspectors soon enforced a strict silence.

All was now prepared; the presence of the victim was alone required to complete the sad ceremony. At length he came, supported by two priests, and listening to their holy consolations with the utmost attention. His face was death-like pale—his limbs trembling—his glances bent downwards. The conduct of Edouard had put the seal upon his former misery; his heart was broken—his energies were gone—hope was blasted within him. His head was bare—it had not been necessary to cut the thin white locks that still hung down his neck; for they were few, and could offer no impediment to the force of the deadly weapon soon to sever them. He looked not to the right, nor to the left—and all present guessed wherefore he chose to cast his eyes upon the ground. But Edouard stared at him with undisguised brutality, as he passed; and the care-worn appearance of the old man failed to produce any effect upon the ruthless boy.



CHAP. X.

THE MASSACRE.

ARRIVED at the foot of the scaffold, the cavalcade halted; and an inspector noticed that the executioner was not there. On inquiry it was discovered that the worthy functionary of the *bagne*, who was himself a convict, had purposely sprained his leg in so dreadful a manner, as to be totally unable to rise from his bed in the hospital, whither he had been conveyed. A low murmur of applause issued from the galley-slaves nearest the scaffold, at these news, which speedily flew from man to man.

"He will be saved!" said Belle-Rose in a whisper.

"Thank God!" cried De Rosann; "but wherefore?"

"There is no executioner," was the reply.

"One will be found, I am afraid," murmured Alfred.

"O no!—the executioner must be a convict; and all will refuse, as sure as you are a living man," rejoined Belle-Rose.

"You do not think that retributive justice will be thus cheated of its prey?" continued De Rosann, as he breathed an inaudible prayer to the Almighty Judge of heaven and earth to spare the grey hairs of that old man.

"I don't know anything about those fine-turned sentences, my dear fellow," said Belle-Rose, impatiently. "but what I mean to insinuate is, that François stands a devilish good chance of escaping."

"Would to heaven that he did!" whispered our hero, with the most unfeigned sincerity.

"Be heaven or hell the arbiter of his fate, comrade," added Belle-Rose, "the thing will take pretty well the same turn. If no one will pull that little cord yonder, then François' head will not be severed from his shoulders: and although they may shackle, and bind, and enchain us, they cannot compel us to mount that scaffold and enact the part of common executioners."

"True!" said De Rosann. "But hither comes the Commissary: let us await the event with resignation and in silence!"

The Governor stepped forward: he had a painful duty to perform; but he was obliged to acquit himself of it. Nevertheless, his cheek was pale, and his voice was trembling: perhaps *he* also entertained the same hope that animated many others; for no one, however hard his heart—however strict his ideas of moral rectitude and justice might be, could mark that old man's hoary locks, turn to the gloomy aspect of the *guillotine*, and recollect at the same moment all the circumstances of the case, without experiencing a certain mental attenuation, a kindly feeling, a sentiment of deep commiseration, in favour of him whose days, whose hours—whose very minutes were haply numbered. The Commissary *did* betray this humane spirit, and vainly endeavoured to preserve an assumed coolness as he addressed the convicts in the following terms:—

"Prisoners, the absence of the individual, who should this day have completed the awful sentence which has been pronounced against the criminal doomed to expiate his dreadful action on that scaffold, obliges

me to have recourse to an extremity seldom practised within these walls. You are assembled to witness the execution of a malefactor, not that mere idle curiosity may be gratified, nor because it is deemed indispensable that his blood be poured out in the presence of a crowd: O no! you are called hither from a far different motive. It is that the example may be a salutary one; that the mournful ceremony may be a warning to you for the future, and an useful lesson against giving way to the intemperance of the passions. But it is not my object to descant on this head. One amongst you must supply the place of him who is wanting: the ends of justice cannot be defeated by the petty evasions of a coward. Who, then, is hardy enough to volunteer? And as the office of executioner is rendered by man's enormities a necessary one in the world, there has been a remuneration attached to it. In the present case, he that offers himself, shall be exempt from all labour during the remainder of his sojourn within these walls, shall dwell apart from the rest, and shall receive a certain sum for the performance of the functions of his office this day!"

A cold sweat stood upon De Rosann's brow at the termination of this speech, which, despite of the tremulous tone in which it was delivered, appeared cold-blooded and expressive of a horrible greediness for human gore. But its purport necessarily gave it this savage appearance: in reality it was as mild as the subject would allow. An awful silence succeeded its delivery: the Governor gazed upon the multitude before him; and his heart entertained a hope that his words were futile. In that case François would be remanded to his dungeon; a due report would be made to the proper quarters; and the royal mercy was certain not to be demanded in vain.

Scarcely a breath was drawn—the serried ranks of soldiers were as still as death—the convicts awaited the result in motionless anxiety; the sentries forbore to vary the silence with the noise of their paces to and fro on their respective posts—and the very breeze appeared to lull itself in unison with the rest. The priests muttered not a sound—the old man ventured to raise his head for an instant, and lift up his eyes to heaven to express his last hope. His lips moved—a minute had passed since the concluding syllables of the Governor's address were uttered and were dissipated in the air. A minute, at such a time and on such an occasion, was an age: suspense makes years of moments, centuries of hours. But no reply succeeded to the appeal: the bait held out allured not even one of those degraded beings: the treachery of Judas was not to be there purchased with the thirty pieces of silver. Nearly another minute elapsed: a hum of satisfaction commenced throughout the ranks of convicts; the old man, whose supplication had apparently been listened to and granted at the throne of eternal grace, smiled faintly; the priests were about to begin a prayer of thanksgiving—the sentry had resumed his march—the Governor turned, with tears of satisfaction in his eyes, to remand François to his dungeon—and Belle-Rose ventured a joke at the expense of Champignon, to demonstrate his joy—when a convict, who was not manacled, issued from the band, stepped quickly up to where the Commissary was standing, and cried in a firm tone of voice, "I accept your proffer, and am ready to do my duty!" The Governor retrograded a few paces, as if confronted by a wild beast, or

venomous thing, and stared in stupid astonishment, mingled with horror, upon the speaker. An universal groan burst from all those who recognized the volunteer—disgust, alarm, anger, were depicted upon the countenances of the galley-slaves; for it was Edouard that now stood forward as the executioner of his benefactor!

“The monster!” cried Belle-Rose: “François is lost!”

“The Governor hesitates,” said De Rosann; “there is yet hope.”

“A fellow like that would eat his own father,” interrupted Champignon, “if he were only served up with a *sauce piquante*.”

“Alas! hope is vain,” remarked the experienced Belle-Rose: “the Governor as yet scarcely believes his own ears—his own eyes; but when his astonishment is past, he dares not refuse to accept Edouard’s services: François must die!”

“And become meat for worms!” added Champignon.

“See, see!” cried Belle-Rose, after a pause—“the wretch advances towards the scaffold: in five minutes all will be over.”

“Silence!” exclaimed the Governor, who had recovered his usual presence of mind, and had prepared to terminate the melancholy ceremony with as much despatch as possible.

In a few moments Edouard was seen upon the platform of the *guillotine*, awaiting the arrival of his victim. The countenance of the vile youth had not lost one atom of its usual colour; nor did his hands appear to tremble as he touched the strings that restrained the fatal knife in its position between the summits of the two poles. Old François was led up the steps—for he could not walk alone. He appeared already more dead than alive: this last blow had struck him dumb. He had endeavoured to support the knowledge of the damning fact of Edouard’s having sworn away his life; but now that the same individual was the one who had volunteered—freely volunteered to snap the last thread of a feeble existence—an existence he himself had been the accursed means of abridging—the idea was too much for mortal man to sustain with reason. Once, and once only, did François essay to speak, when upon the platform of the scaffold; but his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, and refused utterance to a syllable. He suffered himself to be bound to the narrow plank: it was Edouard who adjusted the harsh cords with a blood-thirsty coolness and a skilful precision that would have astonished even the absent executioner. A breathless silence again pervaded all around—every eye was fixed upon the awful scene—every heart felt oppressed—every bosom throbbed—the priests whispered their last consolation in the ears of the departing man—the plank was lowered—Edouard’s hand grasped the string—the knife fell with a whizzing sound—and the criminal’s head rolled into the basket prepared to receive it.

The silence that had reigned immediately before the execution, was not broken by a soul, till a few minutes after it. It resembled the stillness of the atmosphere, which succeeds a loud burst of thunder, in the mirthful month of June. At length that dread tranquillity ceased; and hisses, and groans, and loud cries speedily formed a strong contrast. The convicts discoursed amongst themselves; in vain the authorities endeavoured to impose silence—the commands of the inspectors were totally disregarded. A terrible idea seemed to have taken possession

of that party of galley-slaves that was nearest to the scaffold; and reproaches against Edouard, mingled with threats, issued from their ranks. The Governor called to order—the soldiers rattled their arms—and the sentries cast vigilant looks around—but the spirit which now influenced the convicts was not easily repressed: and in a moment the hitherto stifled shout of “Vengeance! vengeance on the murderer!” burst forth with appalling vehemence. It seemed as if a hundred thousand voices were concentrated together to chaunt forth the terrible chorus: the menaces, the supplications, the orders, and the entreaties of the Commissary, the inspector, and other authorities, were, in comparison with that dread sound, as the scream of an infant on the strand of the boisterous ocean.

Amidst the continued din of a thousand cries was soon heard the rattling of chains, and the clanking of the fetters of which the convicts endeavoured to disencumber themselves: and then a simultaneous rush towards the scaffold but too distinctly proclaimed the intention of the infuriate mob. Edouard, who had hitherto remained upon the platform, now suspected that he was the cause of this disturbance—the object of that increasing ire; and, giving full vent to his terror in a loud scream, he hastily descended the steps, and sought protection by the side of the Governor. His disappearance from the scaffold of the *guillotine* was instantly noticed; and another cry of extermination, which struck every ear, and which no one could mistake, issued from the enraged convicts, while the clanking of their chains still continued as a horrible chorus to the repeated shouts for blood.

In five minutes the vindictive spirit, that had thus influenced the foremost rank of the shackled criminals, was disseminated throughout the whole; and the cries and the shouts became every instant more appalling. De Rosann, irresolute how to act, was dragged onwards with the rest: Belle-Rose whispered a word of hope in his ear—and they performed their utmost to add to the confusion.

The present position of all the various parties, passive or active, may be rendered comprehensible in one moment, if it be not already understood. The reader must picture to himself an immense arena, bounded by high walls or buildings on all sides, and entirely encompassed within by a military force. In the centre stood the scaffold, on which the criminal had been executed. Around that scaffold, filling up the vacancy between it and the ranks of soldiers, were the disordered squadrons of convicts, mixed pell mell together, all pushing towards one point, and moving on but slowly, because those nearest were afraid to show themselves too prominently in the mutiny, if it can be so called, and were urged forward by the more daring mob behind them. At a little distance from the scaffolding, a circle of spars and ropes had been constructed to repress the advance of the convicts; and within those limits stood the prison authorities. Half a dozen sentries were placed at certain distances outside the feeble barrier, as an additional precaution against the rude pressure of a curious multitude.

When the first rush was made towards the enclosure, these sentries assumed menacing attitudes, throwing their muskets in a horizontal position, and thus presenting their glittering bayonets to the bodies of the foremost of the mob. But the Governor perceived in a moment the

simultaneousness of the movement on the part of the galley-slaves, and knew that those behind were even more guilty as agitators than those in front. The sentries, therefore, received orders to remain quiet for the present.

But the dilemma in which the Governor was placed, soon became more and more deplorable. It was in vain that he attempted to address the infuriate multitude—his voice was drowned amidst the cries of “Vengeance!” and shouts of “Slaughter!”—the revolt soon became general. To increase the disagreeableness, if not danger, of his position, Edouard now implored protection on his knees before him, and only added to the irresolution of himself and the other authorities. They had not, however, many minutes to deliberate; for the continued clanking of the chains, and occasional hurrahs, proved that some of the galley-slaves were endeavouring to divest themselves of those impediments.

“Fire! fire indiscriminately!” cried the Governor to the sentries ranged around the enclosure; and in an instant the stunning report of half a dozen muskets proclaimed the commencement of the work of death.

A pause in the shouts and the rush of the convicts ensued upon this explosion: but it was momentary; for the extreme measure adopted by the Governor only excited, instead of terrifying, the minds of those who had seen and done too much in their lives to be well acquainted with fear. The barriers were knocked down, the sentries driven back, the Governor and the inspectors were mingled with the crowd; and as the destructive billows of a boisterous main carry all before them, so did spars, platform, railing, and the other appendages of the *guillotine*, wave for a moment, like the masts of a foundering vessel, above the heads of the disorderly multitude, and then suddenly disappear. The space, where the scaffold ere now stood, was soon covered over by the waves of that living ocean, which was poured out in such wild confusion all around; and the hollow murmur of a thousand voices, succeeding to the harsh cries that had hitherto rent the air, sounded to the ear like the distant rush of a vast torrent.

For some time Edouard clung with agonizing tenacity to the arm of the Commissary; but the agitation of the crowd, the frequent shocks each individual experienced, and the force of those often-repeated concussions, occasioned by the oscillating movements of the great entire mass which no one in particular seemed to direct, but of which every soul was an assistant spring to sustain an unwearied motion, soon separated the wretched young man from the side of his protector, and he shortly found himself in the midst of those convicts who had commenced the riot, and who were the most inveterately disposed against him. A yell of satisfaction, which one might fancy to resemble the deadly whoop of Indians dancing round the fire whereat their prisoners are cooking for the repast of those savage anthropophagi, arose amongst the convicts when Edouard was thus thrown into their power; and a dismal, loud, long shriek issued from the lips of the wretched being, who but too well divined the horrible fate that was in reserve for him.

While the victim was thus secured to those who thirsted for his blood in the centre of the mutinous body, the convicts on the outside had to

contend against the attacks of the soldiery. No muskets were discharged; but the bayonet was a powerful reasoner to compel the refractory to a surrender; and as the circumference of the crowd of insurgents gradually became lessened, order would have been soon re-established through the efforts of the military, unaccustomed as those brave warriors were to a warfare where they were obliged to abstain from rigorous measures as much as possible, had not the terrible screams of Edouard for a moment suspended all operations, and reduced both soldiers and galley-slaves to silence and transitory inactivity on the extremities of the mass of people thus condensed together, while a terrible massacre was being perpetrated in the middle, whither no bayonets had as yet forced an entrance. The infuriate convicts of the centre seized hold of Edouard, and tossed him from one to the other, like a frail vessel hurled from billow to billow at the mercy of the winds. They then formed a small opening amongst them, and placed him in the midst, to respond to their interrogatories. At first he answered not, being half dead with fear and the bruises he had received; but a violent blow from the rough hand of the spokesman speedily aroused him to a sense of his predicament, and drew prompt replies from his lips. It was as easy for him to refuse to obey, as for an infant to combat the will of a giant.

"You offspring of the devil," began the spokesman, in the name of the rest, "answer me truly: was François guilty of the crime that sent him to the scaffold?"

"No—no—he was innocent!" screamed the youth, veiling his face with his hands, and sobbing bitterly.

"And who should have suffered in his place?"

"I—myself—for I alone was culpable."

"You murdered the inspector, villain?"

"I did—I did: oh! God, forgive me!" and Edouard's agony was expressed in groans and sighs that would have excited the commiseration of any save his present auditors.

"And the broken knife?" continued the interrogator sharply.

"It was borrowed for me, and I afterwards transferred the handle to François' pocket."

"As for the murder, I can understand that easily enough," pursued the convict, who had taken upon himself the office of interlocutor, with a brutal affectation of jocularly; "but I scarcely comprehend how and wherefore you could become the executioner."

"I was wearied, and afraid of your reproaches," replied Edouard in a faint voice, "for having given my testimony against one who was always kind to me: and the prospect of being exempt from labour, and of being apart from the other convicts, induced me to volunteer my services to the Governor."

"Infamous wretch! it would do me good to cut your hard heart out of your body," thundered the convict, accompanying his detestable speech with a severe blow on the youth's cheek.

That was the signal to his companions for a recommencement of their brutalities, and in a moment Edouard was again hurled from one to the other. It was then that his piercing screams thrilled so frightfully in the ears of the soldiers, and echoed around the gloomy prison. His limbs were dislocated in the demoniac sport—his yells were disregarded—

his eyes almost started from his head—his teeth were knocked out—his mouth was dripping with gore. A convict, perhaps from merciful motives of putting a speedy end to his miseries, or else with a savage thirst for blood and cruelty, raised his chains, and struck the unfortunate boy a severe blow on the head. Then the screams suddenly ceased; and a shapeless, filthy, disgusting mass of flesh, without the slightest sign of life, fell at the feet of De Rosann and Belle-Rose, who exchanged looks of unutterable horror.

But before the sanguinary deed was accomplished, and while the screams of Edouard yet thrilled in every ear, the soldiers, awaking to energy from a pause which was only of sufficient duration to allow them to inquire and discover the cause of those heart-rending yells, proceeded, by the command of their officers, to force a passage to the centre of the throng, with the intention of rescuing the victim from the clutches of his murderers. They, however, experienced a fierce and powerful opposition. Many of the convicts had disencumbered themselves of their iron fetters, and converted them into weapons of defence. The strife was therefore savage—much blood was shed—and the contention had assumed a most serious aspect, when the sad cause of it, deprived of life, was thrown at De Rosann's feet.

The combat still raged: the soldiers endeavoured to secure those convicts who had succeeded in extricating themselves from their manacles, and to compel the others to return to a state of tranquillity and order; while the galley-slaves fought to resist the military. In the midst of the confusion—when the turmoil was at its greatest height—when cries and shouts made a deafening din, and each individual was as regardless of the actions of his neighbour as self-interest and the idea of self-preservation could possibly make him—when the Governor vainly essayed once more an interposition of his authority—when an inspector, who cried out "Peace!" as loud his voice could bawl, received for all answer a knock on the mouth with a chain—when the soldiers had left the walls, under which they were at first ranged, and had become mingled promiscuously with the original promoters of the strife—and when, by a sudden movement, the whole belligerent mass verged towards the building in which the door that gave ingress and egress to the prison was situate;—at that auspicious moment an old man made his way with difficulty through the crowd, and sought the place where De Rosann and Belle-Rose were together resisting the shocks and concussions of those who surrounded them. Plombier—for it was he—gave a single nod of recognition, and put a little key into the hands of each. Not a word passed between them. De Rosann and Belle-Rose were well aware of the purpose for which those diminutive instruments were given, and speedily availed themselves of so useful an agency to cast off the galling fetters that had hitherto restrained their limbs in ignominious thrall. Plombier then made a sign for them to follow him, and again forced his way through the crowd. But instead of taking the direction of the principal gate, he pursued another, which obliged him, and those who were guided by his motions, to force their road amongst the densest part of the throng. At length Fortune and hardy elbows favoured their schemes, and they stopped at the wall that bounded one side of the large square. Within a few yards was a small door, which Plombier opened; and an-

other moment saw them all three in a second enclosure, away from the rude multitude, whose shouts still echoed up to heaven.

"You have your passports about you?" said Plombier, stopping to recover breath, and speaking for the first time since his encounter with De Rosann and Belle-Rose.

A reply in the affirmative satisfied the old man, who did not waste any time in idle discourse, but again walked quickly on, followed by the two convicts. They crossed the second enclosure, and arrived at a small lodge, to which Plombier introduced his companions; and having supplied them each with a change of apparel, he bade them hasten to lay aside their prison garb. This was the work of a few moments: Plombier then addressed them as follows:—

"My dear friends, your deliverance is at hand; and I sincerely hope your escape will lead you to better fortunes. Your memories have doubtless treasured up all that Leblond told you in the gaol of Verneuil: the time will perhaps soon arrive when your gratitude to the great author or authors of your present happy egress from these accursed walls will be put to the test. May you not be found wanting! I have now done my duty. Depart; and, when the moment shall be at hand, do you perform yours. Adieu!"

With these words he opened a wicket that led into a narrow street, and gently pushed De Rosann and Belle-Rose from the lodge. The former turned round to express his thanks; but the old man had retired—the wicket was closed—and Alfred was fain to follow his companion away from the gloomy walls.

At a little distance, the challenge of a sentry struck a momentary terror to our hero's heart: but the soldier entertained not the slightest suspicion of the real truth; he merely examined the passports, or rather cast a very cursory glance over them, and politely informed our hero and his comrade that they might pursue their way, a permission which they did not give him the trouble to repeat.

"Nothing could have happened more fortunately than the murder of the inspector, the condemnation of François, and the ingratitude of Edouard," remarked Belle-Rose, as they issued from the town-gates and breathed the fresh air of the country.

"The calamities of one man," said De Rosann somewhat mournfully, "often conduce to another's welfare; and the glories of the successful are usually erected on the ruins of many."

"Poor Champignon!" exclaimed Belle-Rose, desirous of turning the conversation into a blither strain; "I am almost sorry to be obliged to leave him behind us."

"I saw him making most piteous faces, and heard him utter dreadful yells, during the commotion," returned De Rosann; "and if the scenes he has this morning witnessed do not expel some valuable culinary ideas from his head, I know not what could."

"Such an eventful day have I never passed," said Belle-Rose, casting an anxious glance behind him; "and I assure you I have seen enough during my brief career: but the horrors attending the execution of that poor old man, who was sacrificed after all, will not be readily effaced from my memory."

"I hope most sincerely," cried De Rosann, with a species of religious

fervour to which he was not accustomed, "that the lesson may be an useful one both for you and me."

"As for lessons being useful, and examples good," replied Belle-Rose coolly, "I can hear my grandmother or the parish parson talk about that kind of thing any time in the course of the week; but that my memory will treasure up the events of this morning with the greatest tenacity, is quite certain: not to be of the most remote service to me in a moral point, my dear fellow, because my life will always continue the same: the singularity and horror of the circumstances alone render them worthy of recollection in my mind."

No sooner had Belle-Rose done speaking, than the roar of a cannon fell upon the ears of himself and De Rosann, and drove the colour from the cheek of the latter. In a moment the explosion was repeated, and then a third time. De Rosann turned round to ascertain whence the smoke issued: the misty volumes came from the walls of Brest, and rolled over the fertile plains which he and his companion were traversing.

"The riot is at length concluded," exclaimed Belle-Rose, "and our flight is discovered. But do not be alarmed, my dear fellow," he added, noticing the extreme terror of De Rosann, who would rather have entered a lion's den than have returned to the galleys: "when I escaped with Leblond—then called Ledoux—from Toulon, I was only at the gate of the town the instant the warning guns were fired; and we are already a good league from the *glacis*. Take courage—march boldly on—let us gain yonder wood, and I pledge my existence to our safety."

The cannon again fired three times as Belle-Rose uttered these words, and De Rosann required no other *stimulus* to urge him forward. He walked with a desperate courage, determined not to be overcome by fatigue, nor to give way to weariness; and his companion from time to time held out such hopes as reason declared to be feasible. Presently they entered the wood, and De Rosann gave vent to an exclamation of joy. Belle-Rose reiterated his assurance that they were now beyond the reach of danger, and might indulge in a quarter of an hour's repose; for the reader must recollect all they have gone through since day-break. They seated themselves on a green bank, and were hazarding conjectures relative to the event of the riot in the prison, when, to their astonishment, the report of artillery fell upon their ears a third time. There was no mistaking that sonorous explosion—once—twice—thrice again. Belle-Rose started up, and looked towards the town they had left far behind them. Thence came the smoke once more, borne upon the breeze that blew steadily from the ocean.

"This is a glorious day," cried Belle-Rose; "three convicts have escaped!"

"But who can be the third?" asked De Rosann.

CHAP. XI.

THE PEASANTS.

THE rays of a scorching meridian sun now penetrated through the dense covering of boughs and leaves beneath which De Rosann and Belle-

Rose enjoyed a momentary repose. The ideas that occupied their minds may be readily imagined—joy for their lucky escape, and anxiety to preserve their liberty. That the gendarmes would speedily be upon the alert was very certain; but the conviction that their cunning was not infallible, offered considerable consolation to our hero and his companion. Besides this, Belle-Rose was well versed in the geography of all that neighbourhood; he knew the devious cuts and turnings of the wood, where it was impossible for the mounted police to conduct their horses, and where it was not probable they would search on foot; he was acquainted with those cottages at which food might be sought for in safety, and even beds for the night, if necessary; and he could tell every point of the compass in the dark, and in the midst of that vast maze of thicket and of verdure. With such a guide De Rosann had little to fear; he was, moreover, well aware of the cool and deliberate courage of Belle-Rose; and he did not dread any treachery on the part of that individual, because they were embarked in the same enterprise, although ignorant of its nature and its object, and because Belle-Rose had nothing to gain in playing a traitor's game.

"Our quarter of an hour has elapsed, and a few additional minutes besides," said Belle-Rose, suddenly rising from the green sward, and preparing to continue his march: "let us penetrate one league* deeper into this wood, De Rosann, and we shall not only be secure against the visits of gendarmes, but shall also find wherewith to satisfy the cravings of our appetites; for to tell you the truth, my morning's repast has long since ceased to allay a certain hunger which takes us all at times."

"For my part," returned Alfred, leaping from the grass, "I have before made you acquainted with the forlorn state of my pocket. Were we in some town of repute, I could readily draw a bill upon a friend in Paris, which would not be dishonoured."

"Yes, my dear fellow," said Belle-Rose, with his usual coolness; "but in the midst of this wood your credit is of as much utility to us as a bank-note would have been to Noah in his ark."

"I merely ventured an observation," cried De Rosann somewhat petulantly.

"And a deuced foolish one it was too, so far as it regards the present moment," remarked Belle-Rose.

"Sir—I do not understand —" began De Rosann, offended at his companion's levity.

"What! are we going to quarrel at an instant when you require my services to procure you a luncheon!" exclaimed Belle-Rose with the most ineffable good humour, while Alfred reddened at the idea of his ridiculous wrath. "Come, my good fellow; we will just place another league between us and the town, and then talk of eating, or fighting, or any other matter you choose."

This little dispute, if it can be so called, made De Rosann feel that in the midst of danger and trouble Belle-Rose was superior to himself; that the adventurer, with his good humour, his constitutional gaiety,

* A French league consists of fourteen hundred and sixty-seven yards, or two miles and a half, English measure.

and his undoubted courage, was better adapted to encounter adversity, and to surmount the difficulties that presented themselves in his way, than the fine gentleman endowed with honourable feelings and sentiments of delicacy, jealous of his reputation, and prompt to resent a joke when too familiar; and he was obliged to confess in his own mind that the Grand Secret Source, whence emanated the means which procured his deliverance from the galleys, displayed a striking proof of wisdom, in enlisting under its banners those individuals who had been tutored to perseverance and endurance by the caprices of a variety of fortunes. The contemptuous idea he had hitherto entertained of Belle-Rose, essentially diminished as he made these reflections; and he fancied that, had his present companion possessed advantages and experienced the slightest encouragement in early life, he would most likely have been a valuable member of society, if not an ornament to his country. As it was, Pierre Belle-Rose must never hope to rise above the adventurer, aspire to no loftier name, nor seek another profession. His habits, his manners, and his capacities, were all wedded to, and connected with, mean things: an escape from the galleys was his mightiest performance; the unlawful conveyance of a couple of roast fowls from a stranger's spit to his own pocket, was one of his finest feats, and the trick at which he would laugh the most. Thus, instead of displaying his talent for intrigue on the wide theatre of public and political life—instead of practising his abilities of chicanery and invention at the bar—instead of making for himself an untarnished reputation, we find him the sport of circumstances, the “tennis-ball of Fortune,” a wanderer without a home!

Had Belle-Rose guessed the train of De Rosann's thoughts, and the nature of his reflections, he would most likely have desired him to cease his moralising. But as the principles of the human mind do not embrace the capacity of divining the ruminations of another, he remained silent, and pursued his way through the unbeaten part of the wood, followed by De Rosann, who stepped courageously forward in the track of his guide. In about half an hour a miserable hut, almost entirely concealed amongst bushes and brambles, caught the eyes of our hero. Thither Belle-Rose directed his march, with a smile of satisfaction on his countenance.

“I told you we should not be long, and that I was certain of finding the way,” said he, as they stopped at the cottage door. “But hark! there is a songster within.”

De Rosann listened; and the following words, chaunted by a female voice far from disagreeable, met his ears:—

“Here's the goblet, whence his lip
Deigned my humble wine to sip,
Forgotten never!”—
—“Mother, you will keep it ever,
Will keep it ever!”

“’Tis the *Souvenirs du Peuple*,” whispered Alfred, as the last syllables of the above lines died away into silence: “we shall have admirers of Napoleon in these humble walls.”

* The entire song is published in Part V. of “Pickwick Abroad.”

"Let us eat first; and the sweet chorister shall make us melody afterwards," returned Belle-Rose, as he knocked at the door

"*Entrez—entrez*," cried a harsh voice; and the invitation was immediately accepted.

Our travellers found themselves in a room of some dimensions, miserably furnished, and almost suffocated with smoke, which emanated from an immense hearth where a large cauldron of soup was simmering over a dull fire. In the chimney corner sate an old woman of a forbidding aspect. Her bleared eyes emitted a scalding rheum; her nose was filled with snuff, and her breath smelt of tobacco and garlic. She was bent almost double with extreme age; and when she muttered a few words of welcome to our hero and Belle-Rose, they recognized the harsh voice which had bade them enter the cottage. At a little distance from this hag, whom we might liken to one of the witches in *Macbeth*, stood a girl of about fourteen years of age. She was tall and well-formed, although disguised in the rude garb of a peasant; and her features, if not beautiful, were pleasing to a degree. There was a species of melancholy depicted upon her soft countenance, which appeared somewhat at variance with the coarse and indelicate feelings of the vulgar class, whose passions verge into extremes, whose grief is expressed in dismal howlings, and whose mirth is proclaimed by boisterous shouts of laughter. One would scarcely expect to encounter a placid, resigned, and silent grief—a tranquil sorrow—in a person brought up amongst people whose habits border upon barbarism, whose minds are narrow and superstitious, and whose very felicity is made known rather by grins than smiles.

But an inward melancholy was betrayed by the blue eye and pensive brow of that cottage girl; and De Rosann sighed involuntarily as he gazed upon her mild countenance. It was evidently her voice that he had heard singing the praises of Bonaparte; for she and the old woman alone occupied the cottage at the moment Belle-Rose and Alfred entered it.

"Jeannette, give these strangers the two stools that stand in the corner near the bed, and place somewhat to eat before them."

This command, which was uttered by the old woman in as kind a tone as her harsh voice could assume, was speedily obeyed; and dried fruits, milk, bread, cheese, and cold vegetables, were quickly spread upon the table. Neither De Rosann nor Belle-Rose waited for a ceremonious invitation to partake of the edibles served up to them, but they commenced their attack with all the vigour that a good appetite usually produces. Even the sour wine, to which Jeannette helped them, seemed a luxury at that moment.

"Your dwelling is somewhat retired, my good woman," said Belle-Rose to the old hag, as he pushed his plate away from him, to indicate the conclusion of his meal.

"Yes; but poverty has nothing to fear," was the laconic reply.

"You and this pretty damsel live alone together?" observed Belle-Rose carelessly.

"O no!—her father, who is my son, resides with us. He labours in the fields to obtain the scanty means that support his daughter and his aged mother."

"Ah! he is a dutiful son, then," continued Belle-Rose, affecting an interest in the domestic matters of the poor family—an interest which he did not feel. "And his wife?" added he coolly.

"Alas! she is no more," returned the old woman solemnly, while Jeannette wiped away the tears from her eyes, and stifled a convulsive sob.

"Behold the secret of that sensitive child's melancholy," said De Rosann within himself: "she has not yet forgotten the delights of maternal affection."

Belle-Rose saw that he had touched upon a tender cord, and hastened to turn the conversation.

"I am sure, my good woman," said he, addressing the old crone in a complimentary style, "I am sure I hardly know how to thank you sufficiently for the hospitable entertainment we have received: be assured, however, that neither I nor my companion will readily forget it."

"I would that my poor cabin had better fare to offer you," answered the grandmother, "but such as it is, you are most welcome."

"Oh!" exclaimed Belle-Rose with his usual *nonchalance*, "we are old soldiers, and are accustomed to hardships of every kind."

"Soldiers! are you soldiers?" cried Jeannette, a transient delight beaming in her blue eyes; then, fearful that her sudden vivacity might displease, she hung down her head and blushed deeply.

"Yes, my pretty child, we are soldiers," returned Belle-Rose without the slightest embarrassment; "and have just returned from the wars."

"I thought France was at peace," said the old woman.

"O no!" answered Belle-Rose; "the Chinese have commenced hostilities against us, and the island of Madagascar has revolted."

"Then Algiers is in China, I suppose," cried the grandmother, "and it was the Chinese army which the great Marshal Bourmont defeated."

"Precisely, my good woman. I and my companion were engaged in all the campaigns, and have brought away ever-blooming laurels with us."

"Ah! I should like to see those laurels," said the old woman, while De Rosann had the greatest difficulty to suppress a laugh.

"What kind of men are the Chinese?" inquired Jeannette.

"Giants, my love—seven feet high—mounted upon crocodiles, and clothed in armour," replied Belle-Rose. "Their king, whose name is Chinchangentopemandandarallah, is as tall as the church steeple of Brest, and as fierce as the lions in the *Jardin des Plantes* at Paris. He devours ten oxen at one meal, drinks up a river, and tramples upon his subjects as he walks abroad. Ah! as for his ferocity, God knows some of our poor countrymen can answer for it!"

"Bah! and you have seen all that?" exclaimed the old woman.

"Every atom of it—the king—the crocodiles—and the ten oxen," returned Belle-Rose after a pause, during which he assured himself by a single glance that he was not regarded with looks of incredulity on the part of the grandmother and Jeannette. "I once saw him take up a cow by the tail, just as you, my pretty maiden, would lift a pear by its stalk, and hurl the poor beast a thousand yards."

"Of course it was killed!" remarked the girl.

"No such thing: the cows in that country wear steel jackets and wadded pelisses; and in this instance the happy animal escaped unhurt."

"Papa has not seen so many wonderful sights," cried Jeannette, shaking her head to express the extent of her astonishment at these marvels.

"I dare swear he has not," carelessly remarked Belle-Rose.

"Nor will he ever," added De Rosann with a significant accent; for he was afraid his companion would soon launch out into exaggerations even too ridiculous to be believed by the old woman and her ignorant grand-daughter. But at that moment the door opened, and a sturdy peasant entered the hut. He made a respectful bow in a military fashion to the two strangers, and, drawing forward another stool, seated himself at the table, on which Jeannette placed three soup-plates and as many wooden spoons.

"Will not those gentlemen condescend to partake of our soup?" asked the labourer in good French, which contrasted strongly with the horrible *patois* spoken by his mother.

Jeannette made a sign for her father to change the conversation; but the hospitable peasant did not understand her meaning, and persisted in his inquiry wherefore De Rosann and Belle-Rose disdained the soup?

"People who have seen kings never eat *soupe maigre*, papa," exclaimed Jeannette, unable to keep silent any longer on that interesting head.

"The girl is mad!" cried Claude, for such was the peasant's name: "have not I often seen our gallant Emperor? and do I refuse good *potage* on account of that? No, no! such pride is too ridiculous!"

"Napoleon was not so tall as you," returned Jeannette; "but these gentlemen have seen the King of China—the celebrated Caccancarcary, or some such name—who is as high as the tower at Brest—who eats ten oxen at one meal—who sits upon a crocodile—who takes up a cow by the tail—and who clothes his cattle in steel jackets and wadded pelisses."

The astonishment of the worthy peasant at this tirade can be better conceived than described: the extraordinary contortion that his countenance assumed—the rolling of his eyes—and the manner in which he held his breath so as not to lose a syllable, made such an impression upon Belle-Rose and De Rosann, that they burst forth into a convulsive fit of laughter, thus adding to the poor man's confusion.

"'Twas a fairy tale—do you see?—a romance that I told your daughter ere now," cried Belle-Rose, with tears still in his eyes—the effect of the violent excitement his risible muscles had undergone.

"Ah! I comprehend," returned Claude; and he good-humouredly joined in the mirth as heartily as his two guests.

"Then 'tis all false!" cried Jeannette pettishly.

"Nay, my child—it was done to amuse you," said her father, who had remarked the frown upon her countenance.

"In that case I will forgive you," exclaimed she, casting a kind glance at Belle-Rose.



Belle Rose and the Peasants

"I am an old soldier myself," said the peasant, after a long pause, during which two more plates were laid on the table, and the soup was poured out into each; "and I confess that the history of the Chinese monarch somewhat startled me; for I have served under Napoleon—had the supreme honour of fighting beneath the banners of the greatest warrior that ever the world produced—and never do I seek my humble couch without offering up a prayer, imploring the Divine Majesty to suffer the ashes of the departed hero to be one day cradled in that soil for the glories of whose people he fought and conquered."

"And I sincerely hope that your prayer may be eventually granted, my brave fellow," cried De Rosann, partaking of the other's enthusiasm: "but alas! I am afraid many years will yet pass away ere that last act of justice be done to Napoleon and to France!"

This was a favourite topic; and the conversation soon became general. The old woman mingled in it with warmth and ardour; she related many anecdotes of Bonaparte, and displayed an extraordinary tenacity of memory, while Jeannette listened in reverential silence to the various eulogiums that were uttered in praise of the mighty warrior. Thus is it still to-day—and thus will it be for centuries to come—that the superstitious and unlearned peasant, whose opaque mind will receive an improbable tale as an infallible truth, and whose ignorance relative to the history of his country is more deplorable and profound than imagination can possibly fancy it, will cherish the name of Napoleon as he would the memory of his own child; will describe his battles—enumerate his victories—detail his campaigns; and will conclude the glowing picture with a variety of anecdotes, all bearing reference to the one grand topic, and all to be found in the biographies, which have been from time to time published, of the illustrious commander.

The father of Jeannette was enthusiastic in favour of Napoleon; and as he spoke, his blood appeared to boil with a fanatic frenzy, his eye flashed fire, his nostril dilated. De Rosann and Belle-Rose listened even to that peasant with respect; for the subject of his discourse commanded veneration and inspired awe: and they were not annoyed when he called upon his daughter to sing them a song in praise of the land which had given birth to the mighty hero. Jeannette had no false pride, no coquetry: she did not wait to be solicited several times; but, in obedience to the wishes of her sire, she sang, in rather a melodious voice, the following air:

FRANCE.

Know ye the land where the warriors of story
 Were the pride of the nation, and boast of their king?
 Where the fame of Rolando, and Oliver's glory,
 Were a theme well adapted for minstrels to sing?
 Know ye the land of the great and the brave,
 Whose heroes are mighty to conquer and save;
 Where dwell the undaunted, the bold, and the free?—
 O this is the nation for love and for me!

Know ye the land of the bard and the lover—
 The clime of the bright, and the courteous, and gay?—
 Go—search through the East, and the universe over—
 Go, Frenchman, and languish in lands far away;

In France still your heart is, and e'er will remain;—
 For a fairer than France may you search, but in vain :
 'Tis the land of the great, and the dauntless, and free—
 The nation of love and of pleasure for me !

If you seek for a maiden with loveliness beaming,
 Our Gallia has beauties the fairest that be ;
 The moon in yon sky so tranquilly gleaming,
 Appears not more chaste than our virgins to me.
 Their bosoms are warm, but as fair as the snow—
 They've a smile for your bliss, and a tear for your woe;—
 And this is the land of the courteous and free,
 The nation of beauty and pleasure to me !

They love not their gallants to languish all idly
 In their gilded saloons, from the battle afar ;
 But they send forth their warriors to spread their fame widely,
 And seek for renown in the mazes of war.
 O this is the land of the bravest of old !
 Where maids are most lovely, and warriors most bold,
 Where chiefs are undaunted, and fearless, and free—
 'Tis the land of all bliss and all pleasure to me !

'Tis sweet to recline on the breast softly heaving,
 And beating with transports, of her you adore ;
 'Tis hard to depart when you know you are leaving
 A being you haply may never see more !
 But warriors must wander to aid the opprest,
 Must leave for a time the pleasures of rest,
 And fight for the land of the courteous and free—
 The land that is dearest to Fame and to me !

The chiefs of the South, in idlesse reclining,
 Make Italy echo with pleasure and mirth;—
 While the eyes of their maidens in raptures are shining,
 They dream not of spreading their fame o'er the earth !
 But never may Frenchman an infidel prove
 To the land of his birth, or the maid of his love :—
 He may revel in pleasure, and still can be free
 To fight for the clime which is dearest to me !

It requires but one word in praise of France and the achievements of her thousand heroes—and only a syllable which at all alludes to the name of Napoleon and the reminiscences of his extraordinary deeds, to set a Frenchman's soul on fire. De Rosann was in raptures: he forgot the dangers from which he had ere now escaped—the massacre of Edouard, the execution of François, and the difficulties attending his present predicament—a long journey before him, and gendarmes behind—he recollected not his absent but affectionate Eloise—he cared not for the world without—all, all were as indifferent to him at the present moment as the riches of the earth to the cynic Diogenes. His soul was wrapt in a joyous ecstasy—his imagination pictured glorious visions, in which the apotheosis of the departed heroes of his country was predominant—and the magic influence of the song chased away from his memory the certainties of the present moment, to make way for

the speculations of the past and the idealities of the future. It was not the sweet voice of the cottage girl that had worked this enchantment but it was the extraordinary degree of excitement which the name, song, and previous conversation, that had turned upon the praises of Napoleon, produced in a mind, which had been taught from infancy to regard the Emperor as something more than man—and almost to reverence him as a god.

And when we reflect on the vast and varied accomplishments of the deceased hero—when our eyes scan the long catalogue of glorious victories which have made for him a reputation “more durable than brass”—when we think of the loftiness of soul that embraced the most wonderful designs, that defied as light obstacles those mundane difficulties which other men consider insurmountable barriers to the attainment of their wishes—whether we regard him as a statesman, or as a warrior, our admiration must be the same—and while we condemn him as a tyrant, we may well excuse those sentiments of pride with which the Frenchman boasts of him as a commander and as a politician. All have their faults—and he had many: but in perusing the history of his chequered existence, it must be remembered that the smallest delinquences of an exalted character are invariably registered with his virtues; and that the higher the rank of the individual, the more eager is mankind to detect his peccadilloes and expose his inadvertencies.

CHAPTER XII.

ADVENTURES.

So entirely had Jeannette's song engrossed the attention of the inmates of the cottage, that the soup remained hitherto untouched, and an hour slipped away without being perceived. But the fresh air of the fields, which had sharpened the appetite of the peasant, was not to be encountered by an empty stomach: and the *potage* soon began to disappear from his plate. Jeannette, Belle-Rose, and the grandmother, followed Claude's example; and De Rosann, aroused from his heroic delirium by an unceremonious shake from his companions, was fain to imitate the rest. Scarcely, however, was the frugal meal concluded, when a loud knock at the door startled our hero and Belle-Rose: but their alarms were speedily dissipated; for instead of a tall police officer, with clanking weapons, a lad of about fifteen entered the cottage.

“Well! what possesses the boy,” cried the old woman in a cross tone, “to knock at the wicket, as if he were a fine gentleman who must be invited to enter with all due ceremony: and how is it that you are so late? But sit down, Jacques,” continued the hag, suffering her voice to relax into a less severe tone than she had at first assumed, “and eat your dinner. Jeannette, give your brother a plate, my girl—and let him tell us all the news afterwards.”

“News, indeed!” exclaimed the boy, seating himself near the table, at a respectful distance from his father's guests, whom he eyed from time to time with embarrassment, not knowing whether he might converse freely, or not, in their presence.

"Speak out like a man," cried Claude, who remarked his son's timidity: "these gentlemen are travellers—"

"From China too," interrupted Jeannette with a good-humoured smile upon her countenance.

"And they have condescended to accept our poor hospitality," continued Claude, not heeding the girl's jocularly: "so speak boldly, and tell us all you have seen or heard."

"There have been dreadful riots in the prisons of the galley-slaves," began Jacques, who was just returned from Brest, whither his grandmother had sent him on some errand: "and three convicts have escaped!"

"Three convicts!" exclaimed Belle-Rose coolly, while De Rosann played with his spoon, and held down his head, for he felt the colour mounting to his cheeks.

"Yes—three convicts have escaped," resumed the boy: "another has been executed, and a fifth murdered."

An exclamation of mingled horror and curiosity on the part of Jeannette, Claude, and the old woman, interrupted this recital; but Belle-Rose, pretending to feel a considerable degree of interest in the tale, begged the boy to proceed. Jacques accordingly related, with a thousand exaggerations, those particulars, relative to the decapitation of François, the massacre of Edouard, and the commotion amongst the *forçats*, of which the reader is already aware; adding that, during the riot, three convicts had succeeded in breaking off their chains, and in effecting their escape, but that the gendarmes were on the alert, and that the recapture of the deserters was hourly expected.

"And how did the revolt terminate?" inquired Claude.

"Oh! the soldiers were obliged to use their bayonets," answered the boy; "and then the affair was soon finished. Several of the convicts broke their fetters in the skirmish, to use as weapons of defence; but only three escaped."

"What are their names?" asked Jeannette.

"Just as if I troubled my head about a parcel of names!" cried the boy, thrusting large spoonfuls of soup into his mouth with a peculiar relish.

"No—that's true," remarked Belle-Rose: "never bother yourself with idle appellations."

"It is extraordinary," said Claude, after a pause, "how well those fellows manage to escape: for my part, I cannot fancy in what manner they do it."

"Nor I," added Belle-Rose, with the most ineffable coolness, as he kicked De Rosann's foot beneath the table: then turning to Claude, he said, "But I wonder the fugitives never seek a momentary refuge in this cottage, at least till the fervour of the first search be past: methinks your hut is admirably contrived for such a shelter."

"O no! the gendarmes know it well," cried Jeannette.

"Yes—and for that very reason they never visit it," added Claude, in a tone of voice intended to rebuke the hasty remark which his daughter had made: "they are aware that, although we be poor, we are honest, and would not for the world harbour a man whose crimes had rendered him deserving of punishment; for, according to my ideas," continued the

peasant, "it is not a duty imposed by humanity, nor the rights of hospitality, to protect offenders against the laws of our country."

"I perfectly agree with you, my honest friend," exclaimed Belle-Rose; "and advise you always to practise those principles which sound so well in theory."

"Every honest man must be of the same opinion," said the unlearned but upright labourer, who did not perceive that Belle-Rose was ridiculing the severity of the ideas of justice entertained by this modern Draco.

"*Summum jus, summa injuria*," thought De Rosann, anxious that this conversation should terminate, for the topic was anything but agreeable to him: and at this moment he again envied the wonderful coolness and *sang-froid* of Belle-Rose, whose countenance did not vary a shade, nor his features a muscle, as he discoursed on matters so intimately connected with his own private circumstances, and those of his companion.

To the great delight of our hero, Claude soon rose from the table, wished his guests a respectful "Good morning," and issued forth to resume his toils. In a quarter of an hour, when Belle-Rose thought the peasant was at a sufficient distance, he made a sign to De Rosann, who gave a nod to signify acquiescence, and they once more set out on their journey, having returned a thousand thanks for the hospitality they had experienced. It was now nearly three o'clock; the oblique rays of the sun with difficulty penetrated through the thick wood, which became more dense and entangled the further our travellers advanced into it; and a refreshing breeze, blowing directly from the westward, diminished still further the influence of the heat.

"Let us proceed gently," said Belle-Rose; "for it is useless—nay, even dangerous, to quit the mazes of the wood ere night-fall. We are as secure in these labyrinths as in the midst of the deserts of Saara; but were we to emerge into the open fields, we should run the risk of a disagreeable encounter."

"It is extraordinary," remarked Alfred, "that the gendarmes do not search this wood throughout in the first instance. They cannot expect to find fugitive convicts walking quietly along the main-roads, to be picked up at pleasure, and be reconducted to their gaols."

"'Live and learn,' quoth the proverb, my dear fellow," cried Belle-Rose: "your astonishment is very natural; but two words from the lips of experience will explain the mystery. The gendarmes say to themselves, 'Where shall we look for this convict who has escaped, and who will make use of all his cunning to avoid encountering us?' 'Not in a wood, the entrance of which is nearly on the very slope of the glaxis,' replies Common Sense: 'the convict suspects that you would scarcely omit searching it throughout, and therefore conceals himself any where but there.' Upon this the gendarmes commence scouring the country, and never dream that the objects of their investigation are scarcely three leagues from the town."

"I must really compliment you on your fore-thought," cried De Rosann. "Had I been by myself, I should have certainly acted differently, and have endeavoured to place as great a distance between me and Brest, and that in as short a time, as possible."

"You were brought up a gentle man De Rosann, and I a scamp---an

adventurer—a good-for-nothing fellow,” returned Belle-Rose with a smile: “but the gendarmes are seldom outwitted by the gentleman; they can only be cheated by men that have had a little experience in a certain way. Now, I dare swear, the other convict, who has escaped this morning, is ten leagues further from the town than we are: that is, if he be not an old hand. And, in case my supposition is correct, he stands a thousand more chances of being captured than we do.”

“Hark!” cried De Rosann: “did you not hear something—a rustling amongst the trees?”

“Yes; but it is nothing,” answered Belle-Rose without a moment’s hesitation, and without lowering his voice. “Fear changes the terrified pace of a rat or a rabbit into the trampling of a gendarme’s horse; whereas presence of mind hears sounds as they really are.”

De Rosann coloured at this rebuke; but he knew that he deserved it, and that Belle-Rose did not utter it maliciously: he therefore said nothing.

“We are now near the extremity of the wood, and must repose ourselves once more,” said Belle-Rose, after a long pause, during which they had unconsciously quickened their pace. “I did not know we were quite so far from the hut of the worthy Claude, who, by the bye, is a most consummate ass with his rigorous ideas of justice, and of the necessity of maintaining social order at the expense of humanity.”

“I confess,” said De Rosann, “one may push justice to such an extremity, that it changes its name and becomes cruelty.”

“What can you expect from barbarian ignorance? Tell him and his family an anecdote of Napoleon, and they will worship you. Solicit their hospitality, and they give you food and shelter with pleasure: but lay yourself open to them, throw your life upon their mercy, confess that you are a *forçat évadé*, and they will eject you from their dwelling, as if there were pestilence in your very breath.”

“And yet, with the most rude and uncultured minds, the harmony of music has a powerful sway,” said De Rosann. “Shakspeare—the pride of English dramatic authors—has a splendid idea on the subject. But the sun is declining fast—the shades of evening will soon envelope us—and meseems that we have rested well and often during the day.”

“In half an hour we will pursue our march towards Morlaix,” answered Belle-Rose. “In the neighbourhood of that town I know where we can procure both supper and bed, should you feel tired. The former is essential: as to the latter, we may decide anon.”

“Act entirely according to your own judgment; I shall not be weary, if it be necessary to travel the whole night. When one is situated as we are, he must not attend to mere comforts.”

“In this case,” returned Belle-Rose, “we may do as it seems good to us. Our safety is not compromised by sleeping at the cottage whither I am about to conduct you: and I have already given my reasons for not wishing to hasten too precipitately away from the neighbourhood.”

A sudden rustling amongst the trees interrupted this conversation. Belle-Rose listened for a moment—the noise continued—and his experienced ear told him that it was caused by the footsteps of a man. He caught hold of De Rosann’s arm, and whispered his suspicions in as low

a tone of voice as possible : but the sudden alarm so terrified the mind of our hero, that he started up from the bank on which they were seated, and advanced several paces towards the outside of the wood, ere he was stopped by his companion. This unguarded conduct on the part of De Rosann, instead of betraying them to a foe, proved of considerable benefit : for the disturbance their movements had made amongst the dead leaves strewed upon the ground, apparently alarmed the individual who had first terrified them ; and in an instant they heard him retreating into the thickest recesses of the wood, with a speed which nothing but an extreme terror could have occasioned.

“ That is no gendarme,” cried Belle-Rose, laughing heartily.

“ But he may be the convict for whom the guns fired a third time,” returned De Rosann.

“ Very probably ; and if so, I am glad he has failed to encounter us ; for we could not have easily refused the poor devil the pleasure of travelling in our society ; and that would have disorganized all our plans, as well as have endangered our personal security. But it is now some time since the sun has set : let us hasten and conclude our first day’s march.”

Belle-Rose and our hero accordingly emerged from the wood, which had stood them in such friendly need, and pursued their journey across the open fields. A clear moon soon shewed its chaste disk, and a cloudless sky, spangled with a thousand stars, was above their heads. No danger was to be dreaded as to Belle-Rose missing his way : the whole country was better known to him than a private estate is to its owner. Every thing appeared to favour their flight and to inspire them with courage ; and if De Rosann occasionally heaved a sigh, it was when he thought of his absent Eloise : but he determined to write to her on the first opportunity, and inform her of his escape, and of his intention to revisit Paris. He knew that his letters would be welcome ; and that his presence would be a thousand times more so ; and he consoled himself with the certainty of her unalterable love.

Little or no conversation passed between our hero and his companion, as they hastened forward in the silence of the night ; each appeared occupied with his own reflections. In this manner they completed about four leagues, when suddenly a light met their eyes. Belle-Rose pointed to it as the beacon of their destination ; and in ten minutes they stopped at the door of a large cottage, from the windows of which emanated the lustre that had struck them in the distance. Belle-Rose gave a low knock, and was immediately invited to enter. He beckoned De Rosann to follow him ; and they found themselves in a commodious chamber, a good fire burning in the hearth, and some slices of meat cooking upon embers by the side. A middle aged man, and a woman some few years younger, were seated at a table, on which a tureen of smoking soup was already served ; a couple of children, with chubby faces and red hands, were playing in a corner. An air of neatness and comfort reigned throughout the modest dwelling ; polished saucepans of glittering copper adorned the walls ; nosegays, arranged upon the mantelpiece in a tasteful manner, shed a sweet perfume around ; and the white table-napkin evinced the care of a thrifty housewife.

The peasants recognized Belle-Rose the moment he entered, and

welcomed both him and his companion with the utmost cordiality : De Rosann soon found himself perfectly at his ease, and joined in the conversation of his hospitable entertainers without the slightest restraint ; while the little boys continued their sport in the corner, apparently not much troubling themselves about the new arrivals.

"It is some time since we have had the pleasure of seeing you, friend Belle-Rose," said the host, as he served the steaming *potage* which had a much better odour than that of the upright Claude.

"Yes, Theodore," returned the worthy Pierre ; "and I have this day done what you and I did a few years ago together."

"How? what!" exclaimed Theodore : "and your comrade as well?"

"Precisely. After supper, when the brats have gone to bed, I will recount you the whole adventure."

"Bravo!" cried the peasant, clapping his hands with joy : then turning to his better half, he said, in a tone of voice approximating a whisper, "Marie, my love, you must regale us with a flask of your deceased uncle's cognac, to welcome Monsieur Belle-Rose and his friend, and to celebrate their escape. You understand me?"

The female gave a significant nod, and left the room for a few minutes, at the expiration of which she returned, bearing in her hand a quart bottle, or *litre*, of the genuine spirit. Conviviality now reigned triumphant ; a variety of toasts were proposed and drank with enthusiasm, and Belle-Rose uttered a thousand facetious things, as the brandy gradually worked its effect upon him. Even De Rosann suffered his usual scruples to be overcome on this occasion ; and he joined in the mirth of his companions with undisguised pleasure, the novelty of his situation, the force of example, and the adventures of the day, baffling all punctiliousness.

In the midst of the conviviality, when the glass was often filled and speedily emptied—when jests flowed unrestrained—and when every heart was gay, a loud knock at the door excited the attention of the revellers. Theodore rose to see who could be there at so late an hour ; and a word from Belle-Rose reassured the drooping courage of De Rosann ; for he instantly pictured to himself gendarmes, chains, and dungeons. But his companion convinced him that no gendarmes would visit the cottage at that time of night, and begged him not to give way to his alarms.

Theodore had taken the precaution of closing the door after him ; and as there was a large screen drawn between it and the table, on one side of the fire-place, the visiter, whoever he might be, could not possibly catch a glimpse of the inmates of the room. In about a minute the peasant returned, laughing so heartily, that tears ran down his cheeks.

"For God's sake, let us share the joke!" cried Belle-Rose.

"He must be a rare witty fellow, that," stammered Theodore, unable to restrain his mirth. "O what a proposition! Can you fancy, my friends—a man who implores my hospitality—and such hospitality as he solicits—Oh! Oh!"

"A supper and a bed, to be sure," exclaimed Belle-Rose.

"Yes—a piece of dry bread for supper—there is no harm in that ; but the bed—all he wants is the pig-stye!"

A roar of laughter followed this explanation, and Belle-Rose declared

his intention of introducing the man whose ambition soared no higher than a pigstye for a couch. But just as he was about to raise the latch, a sudden idea struck him, and he retraced his steps towards the table.

"Do you know, my friends," said he with a serious air, "that the request of this nocturnal visitor is somewhat singular? It strikes me he is the convict for whose flight the guns fired the third time this morning. At all events, let us be upon our guard; and as it does not suit myself nor my comrade to associate with the fugitive, if it be he, you, Theodore, had better accede to his request: give him a bed in an outhouse—"

"There is none."

"Well, in the pigstye, then, since that cleanly tenement can content him; and we will send the poor fellow the relics of our supper, with a glass of *cognac* to cheer his spirits."

Theodore hastily collected together the remnants of the meat and bread, which were upon the table, and having poured out a tolerable *quantum* of brandy into a glass, he hastened to administer to the wants of the wretched being, whose situation was so deplorable as to force him to solicit the boon that had excited such general mirth. In about five minutes he returned: a smile was still on his countenance, but it was mingled with an expression of pity. Marie wiped a tear from her eyes, and turned away to conceal her emotion.

"I endeavoured to make the poor fellow comfortable," said Theodore; "he trembled like a leaf; but it was more through fear than cold. He told me he had not eaten a morsel since the morning, and that he had wandered nearly all day in a wood. I forbore asking any questions, contenting myself with assuring him that he might sleep in peace on my premises, and that he was heartily welcome. Had it not been so dark, he might have seen that I made but a foolish face, when I hammered out a lame excuse for not inviting him to enter the cottage. He was very grateful, however, poor fellow; and I think I heard him weep, as he took the food from my hand. So soon as the grey of morning appears, I will give him some provisions, and dismiss him before you rise from your beds."

These last words were addressed to Belle-Rose and De Rosann; and reminded them that they needed a good night's rest after the fatigues of the day. They accordingly thanked their kind hosts for the hospitality they had met with, and retired to the chamber which had been prepared by the industrious Marie for their reception.

CHAP. XIII.

THE FARM-HOUSE.

SCARCELY had the first ray of twilight announced the dawn, when Theodore left his bed, and sought the larder, to arrange a hasty breakfast for the traveller, whose contented disposition had solicited no better couch than the abode of the unclean animal. The hospitable peasant hastily piled some slices of cold meat on a huge piece of bread, to which were added a morsel of cheese, and a pint bottle of sour wine; and armed with these luxuries, he sallied forth to visit the modest stranger.

As he approached the sty, the noise of his footsteps aroused the slumbering swine; and an immense pig, doubtless fancying that its morning meal was close at hand, made a rush towards the door of the covered den, to force an egress into the yard adjoining. But, in performing this very natural movement, the unwieldy animal placed one of his feet on the countenance of the sleeping stranger; and that individual, whose head was apparently full of gendarmes, and whose dreams were peopled with nothing but police-officers, turnkeys, and inspectors, awoke in a terrible fright, and set up a most fearful howl, perfectly convinced in his own mind that the unsaintly hand of a functionary of justice had thus assailed his person. Not contented with exercising the powers of his voice to their highest key, he also availed himself of the possession of arms and legs, and commenced a vigorous attack on the sides and head of the offending beast, which kicked and plunged in return, and squeaked a discordant chorus to the cries of its assailant. The battle was raging in all its fury when Theodore arrived to put an end to it; and having deposited his viands in a place of safety, he leapt into the sty to restore order. A separation of the combatants was speedily effected; but the stranger was in a most dismal plight. His clothes were one mass of filth—their original colour could not possibly be distinguished—and his face was covered with the greasy mire. Theodore experienced the utmost difficulty to suppress a hearty laugh; he, however, succeeded in overcoming his incipient mirth, and assisted the unfortunate being to escape from the dirty tenement he had occupied during the night. The stranger muttered some words expressive of his gratitude; but Theodore cut him short with a smile, and led him towards the pump, thinking that a good wash would be of more service to him than all the talking in the world.

“Stay!” cried Theodore, an idea flashing across his brain: “it is totally impossible you can travel in those clothes—they are covered with filth—and, to tell the truth, emit no very agreeable exhalation. Besides, we must never do things by halves in this world: I have been in difficulties myself ere now—although, thank God, I obtained a full pardon---and the death of Marie’s uncle made us comfortable. But, while I am talking here, you are shivering with cold. Wait one moment, and I will bring you a change of raiment—of which,” added the peasant, when he was at a little distance, “I think no man ever stood in greater need.”

Theodore did not suffer many moments to elapse before he returned to the spot where he left the stranger, whose joy knew no bounds when the kind-hearted peasant unfolded a complete suit of clothes. It was true that they were neither new nor of the finest texture; but to a man, whose raiment has been rolled in a pigstye, anything in the shape of apparel would wear a cheering aspect. The soiled garments were soon exchanged for the cleanly ones; and Theodore produced the substantial breakfast he had brought to allay the cravings of his guest’s appetite. To be brief, the poor devil recommenced his march, somewhat happier than when he knocked at the cottage door on the previous evening; and Theodore felt satisfied with himself for having rendered a service to a fellow-creature in distress.

In the meantime De Rosann and Belle-Rose had awakened from their

slumbers, evidently refreshed with their night's rest, and in good spirits to continue their journey.

"We shall arrive in the neighbourhood of St. Briene at a suitable hour this evening," said Belle-Rose; "and will sleep outside the walls. To-morrow night we shall see the spires of St. Malo, and the next morning we can walk leisurely into the town, put up at a second rate *auberge*,* and send the landlord to have our passports signed at the *Hotel-de-Ville*. When a respectable housekeeper thus answers for you, it is not necessary to go thither in person."

"And how are we to settle our account at the tavern?" inquired De Rosann, who found every thing admirable in his companion's scheme, except his silence on that head.

"I have a little purse that will answer all exigencies," was the reply. "Do you not recollect the worthy uncle's present at Versailles, where you shammed his nephew with a handkerchief over your head?"

"And yet I did not notice that you transferred it from your prison-garb to your present apparel, when old Plombier gave us a change of clothes in his little lodge."

"Suffice it for you to know, my dear De Rosann, that I have a few Napoleons in my pocket now," returned Belle-Rose, pulling out four or five pieces of the gold coin he named. "But," added he, perceiving that Alfred was lost in astonishment, "I see you cannot comprehend how I passed that money into the prison at Brest; and the way I concealed it must for ever remain a secret, even from you."

"It appears you are well acquainted with Theodore," said Alfred, desirous of turning the conversation.

"He and I escaped together from Brest," replied Belle-Rose; "and like Leblond, he is grateful for my aid and advice on that occasion. You see he is now settled down as a sober peasant: he possesses an acre or two of land round this cottage, which is also his own property; and having renounced the follies of youth, he passes his time in tranquil rural felicity."

"And does not that picture of domestic happiness, which you have just now so ably drawn, induce you to imitate his example?" asked De Rosann.

"Not in the least," answered Belle-Rose: "I could not dwell in the country, in the first place: the restraint of a trade, profession, or fixed employment, would be insupportable; and the idea of a parcel of squalling children is enough to drive one mad. No," continued Pierre, his eyes lighting up with a sudden brilliancy, "such an existence would never suit me. Give me the gay capital—the first city in the universe—its boulevards, its Palais Royal, its theatres, its *restaurants*, and its *cafés*—and I can be happy!"

"Enthusiast!" exclaimed De Rosann.

"Yes—while conversing on this subject, I am indeed enthusiastic. But when I call to mind the happy hours I have passed in that brilliant metropolis—when I think of the thousand pleasures it contains, and the ever-varying delights in which it abounds, I do not wonder that foreigners flock thither in crowds, and tear themselves with difficulty away from

* An inn

the Circean rock; nor am I astonished that so many are daily ruined and undone by the charms of the luxurious city!

The entrance of Theodore, who came to summon his guests to the morning's repast, interrupted this conversation.

"And what have you done with the man of a delicate taste?" inquired Belle-Rose; upon which the peasant narrated all that had taken place both in and out of the pig-stye.

"Was he handsome or ugly—tall or short—fat or thin—in fine, which are his characteristics, that we may consider whether he be a convict, and if we can recognize him or not."

"To tell you the truth," answered Theodore, "I did not dare look at him in the face, when he had once divested himself of the dirt that at first enveloped his person, for fear of laughing outright: but as far as I can recollect, he was moderately stout—not very tall—tolerably ugly—and awkward in his gait."

"That is a description, my dear Theodore, calculated to suit nine men out of any ten," cried Belle-Rose with a smile: "it is easy to perceive that you have never been a clerk in the passport-office at the *Préfecture de Police*.—But let us leave the hero of the stye alone for the present, and think of the repast which the gentle Marie has prepared for us."

"*Soit!*" said Theodore; and they all three descended to the room where the orgies of the preceding evening had taken place, and where the breakfast was now spread upon the table.

When the substantial repast was concluded, Belle-Rose and De Rosann took leave of their hospitable hosts, and pursued their journey, the former again enacting the part of guide as he had done the day before. To be brief, they arrived in the neighbourhood of St. Brieux without encountering any adventure worthy of record; and on the following evening pursued their journey towards St. Malo. The weather was once more favourable to their march; the western breeze still swept the face of the verdant country, laden with the saline particles it had collected in its passage across the ocean; and the whole aspect of nature was smiling and gay. The labourers were abroad, attending to the bounteous harvests which a rich soil produced; the songs of the peasant girls, hastening to their daily labour, mingled with the notes of birds, and made a sweet though incongruous music; the wild flowers, profusely spread around, gave a rich perfume to the elastic air, and adorned the broad plains on which herds of cattle were tranquilly grazing: here the green tobacco-plant occupied wide acres with its somniferous leaves—there incipient crops of corn, gracefully waving to the gentle breeze, were preparing for the destructive hand of the mower*—on one side were thick groves of trees—on the other vineyards, soon to teem with heavy bunches of ripe grapes. All was one vast garden: scarcely a foot of earth, save the beaten pathways, was unoccupied by some flourishing fruit, vegetable, plant, or flower; there was no waste of land that the eye could detect.

Belle-Rose and De Rosann often stopped to contemplate the surrounding beauties of nature; they were not in a hurry to arrive at the

* In France the crops of grain are not cut down with a sickle, but with a scythe.

proposed end of their journey; they had much more time before them than was necessary to complete the distance to which their march of that day was to extend; and they were both too glad to breathe the fresh air of the country, instead of the close atmosphere of a gaol, to deny themselves the pleasure of dwelling on a fine prospect and lovely scenery.

It was not till nearly ten o'clock in the evening that they arrived within three or four miles of St. Malo. The innumerable lights of the town resembled the reflection of countless planets in a deep ocean; and our travellers hailed their vicinity as an assurance of safety, and a guarantee of success. They looked around them to discover a cottage, or isolated dwelling, where they might repose till morning; and the sharp eye of Belle-Rose soon distinguished a glimmering light at a little distance. Thither they bent their steps; and a quarter of an hour brought them to a large farm-house, whose antique gables and quaint architecture were visible beneath the rays of the moon that now emerged from behind the dusky vapours of night. A high railing surrounded the old building; and when De Rosann agitated the gate, which was carefully locked, the loud barking of a dog within the enclosure speedily aroused the attention of the inmates.

"Silence, Azor—silence!" cried the voice of a man who issued from the farm-house; and in a moment the faithful animal ceased his discordant howling.

"Two travellers claim your hospitality for the night; and where they meet with a friendly welcome, they are not ungrateful," cried Belle-Rose, as the man approached the gate of the railing, and seemed to hesitate whether he should open it or not. But the frank and unsophisticated manner in which Pierre had uttered the above demand and assurance in the same breath, the respectable appearance of our hero and his companion, as far as could be judged in an uncertain light, and the naturally kind disposition of the farmer—for he it was in person—terminated his doubts in favour of the two travellers, and the gate flew open to give them admittance.

Introduced to the interior of the dwelling, neither De Rosann nor Belle-Rose were sorry to see a large fire burning on the ample hearth; for although the chilly season of the year had passed, still the nights were far from warm, and the damp air imparted a shivering sensation to those who were long exposed to it.

"*Messieurs*," said the farmer, when he had once more shut and barred the front door, "you are as welcome to all my poor dwelling affords as if you were my own brothers. But I am afraid things will not be quite so comfortable as I could wish; for my wife is ill in bed with a fever—and a man, you know, makes but a sorry housekeeper."

"No apology is necessary," returned De Rosann, drawing his stool closer to the fire; "a mouthful of bread is all that we require; for I fancy we are more fatigued than hungry."

"I do not mean to say that I have got nothing but dry bread," rejoined the farmer with a smile, as he opened a cupboard from which he took cold ham, *bouilli*, and the remnants of a large turkey; "all I wished you to know was that I am incapable of cooking meats to serve up a hot supper: but such as the provisions are, eat and be welcome."

"Meseems that you make good cheer, my friend," cried Belle-Rose,

casting a glance at the turkey, and then turning to the farmer: "to judge by your suppers, your dinners must be exquisite."

"Ah! I understand your allusion," answered the man: "it is true we have fared sumptuously to-day—which is not our custom; for our means are limited, and our wants easily satisfied. The fact is, that about four hours ago a carriage broke down in the main road close by, and three travellers, with a servant, were obliged to put up at my house; for one of the ladies—"

"There were ladies amongst them, eh?" interrupted Belle-Rose, in that careless manner which he frequently assumed.

"Two ladies and a gentleman," replied the farmer; "and the elder of the ladies hurt her ancle in such a manner that it was impossible for her to proceed on foot, as the gentleman at first proposed. But it appears that they were in no particular hurry to arrive at St. Malo—and when I offered the use of my rooms, with good food, and good beds, the whole party resolved upon staying here till the morning. That is the secret of the roast turkey and the boiled ham," added the peasant with a smile.

"Are we not intruding, then, upon your hospitality?" asked De Rosann. "Your house must be full—and we are perhaps two too many."

"Not at all," answered the farmer, with a sincerity that the most suspicious could not doubt; "the dwelling is spacious enough; and if you do not care about sleeping in a room that has never been occupied for upwards of thirty-three years, it is at your service. There are exactly two bedsteads in the apartment; and when you have done your supper, I will myself fetch a couple of mattresses, sheets, and blankets, to place upon them."

"This will turn out an adventure, my dear fellow," cried Belle-Rose, addressing himself to Alfred. "A chamber not occupied for the third of a century—a haunted room, perhaps, such as you read of in the works of an English authoress of repute, Ann Radcliffe, I think. Oh! assuredly this is an adventure!"—and Belle-Rose laughed heartily at his conceit.

"You do not believe in ghosts, then?" inquired the farmer with a singular expression of countenance, which involved a degree of mystery unintelligible to our hero and his fellow-traveller.

"Certainly not; nor does any rational being," returned Belle-Rose, without a moment's hesitation.

"Nor I," added the farmer; "and since you treat superstitious tales with the same ridicule as I do, I will explain wherefore the chamber in question has been locked up during a period of thirty-three years. Had you been afraid of spirits, I should have remained silent."

"But you would have suffered us to sleep in your haunted room all the same," interrupted De Rosann with a smile.

"Yes," said the peasant, "because I have no other apartment to give you, and because I know that you may sleep in that one with impunity, as the story of its being haunted is a silly fable handed down to me by my deceased father. It is as follows:—About thirty-three years ago my father was sitting one evening in this very room, when a violent knock at the gate aroused him from his supper, and drew him to the door. A traveller demanded a night's lodging, as you, gentlemen, have done ere now, and as hundreds do in the course of the year. My

father instantly invited the stranger to enter—sate him down to as good a supper as the house afforded—and, when his meal was concluded, showed him to the identical chamber which gave rise to this tale. Early on the following morning the house was surrounded by gendarmes, and the stranger was taken prisoner. It appears that he had committed a most horrible murder on the person of some nobleman at Paris—”

“Was not his name François?” exclaimed De Rosann, thrown entirely off his guard by the resemblance which this singular tale bore to the one he had heard narrated at Brest, and recollecting the circumstance of the deceased malefactor having lodged at a farm-house in the neighbourhood of St. Malo.

“That was his name,” returned the farmer, casting a searching glance at Alfred, who now noticed his inadvertency, and became red with confusion.

“We were reading of this very trial a day or two ago, in an old number of some journal,” said Belle-Rose hastily: “but pray proceed; your account tallies exactly with that which we perused in the newspaper.”

“There is but little more to add,” continued the farmer, from whose mind all suspicion—had he for a moment entertained any—was entirely banished by the address of Belle-Rose. “The stranger was conveyed to prison, and was condemned to expiate his crime at the galleys for life. Since that moment the apartment he occupied has been closed up; for my father, who was somewhat superstitious, declared that the ghost of the murdered nobleman would not fail to haunt it on the anniversary of the day when François was arrested by the gendarmes.”

“Has it never been opened?” inquired De Rosann.

“Once or twice I have myself visited it, to show my wife that I am not afraid of ghosts or spirits,” answered the farmer; “but as the house is large enough for my small family, and for an occasional traveller or friend, I have never thought of turning the chamber to any use.”

“Well,” cried Belle-Rose, rising from his chair, “if you will have the goodness to conduct us to the haunted apartment, I will soon show you that my courage is not to be intimidated by the ghosts of all the murdered counts and marquises in France. But ere I receive any more favours at your hands, my worthy host, will you excuse me if I be impertinent in asking your name?”

“Louis Dorval, at your service,” returned the farmer.

“I shall not forget it,” said Belle-Rose. “Let us now proceed to the mysterious chamber.”

Dorval—since the reader is at present acquainted with the name of the hospitable farmer—took the candlestick in his hand, and conducted his two guests up a narrow staircase that terminated in a gallery, along one side of which were windows looking into a yard at the back of the house, and on the other were the doors of the various bedchambers. At the end of the corridor was the apartment destined to receive De Rosann and Belle-Rose. The lock for some time resisted the strong hand of Dorval; but it eventually yielded to the rusty key, and the travellers followed their guide into the haunted room. It was large and airy; the ceiling was somewhat discoloured here and there with damps, which the

heat of no occasional fire repressed ; and the bedsteads were mouldering away as rapidly as disuse and worms could consume them.

" Well—what do you think of the bedchamber wherein you must this night repose ?" asked the farmer, holding up his candle to cast the light into as wide a circumference as possible.

" I see no reason why it should not be very comfortable," answered De Rosann.

" Nor I," added Belle-Rose, with a yawn.

" I perceive you are fatigued," said Dorval, " and desirous of a good night's rest. Stay one moment, and I will fetch your mattresses."

The farmer left the room as he uttered these words, and returned in a few minutes, laden with the necessary apparatus for making up the beds. The arrangements were speedily completed ; and having wished our hero and his companion an undisturbed repose, he withdrew to his own apartment.

No sooner had Louis Dorval closed the door of the haunted apartment, as it was called, than Belle-Rose hastily threw off his clothes, and took refuge against the damp air in his warm bed. De Rosann made two or three remarks relative to the singularity of their arrival at the very house in which François had been arrested ; but a few unmeaning monosyllables were all the replies he could obtain. He therefore relinquished the unpleasant task of maintaining a conversation alone, and soon saw the utility of so doing ; for a certain nasal music, emanating from Belle-Rose's couch, made him aware of the attention which would be paid to his discourse.

De Rosann himself did not experience the slightest inclination to sleep. A thousand ideas occupied his mind, and repelled the advance of slumber. He no longer felt fatigued with the effects of his day's journey, nor did he once think of courting the charms of sleep by retiring to his bed. He recollected that in the identical chamber, where he was now seated, a murderer had reposed three and thirty years ago. Perhaps he had slept in the very bed destined to receive himself. De Rosann was not superstitious—he laughed in derision at the bare mention of a spirit, or an allusion to the possibility of the existence of ghosts—he believed that matter alone was visible, tangible, and capable of motion—he knew that when the organized body, called Man, had rendered up its life, sensations and organs performed their functions no longer, and that the decomposing clay could not return from the dark tomb to whose jaws it was consigned ; and at the moment when he found himself alone, as it were—for Belle-Rose slept soundly—in the apartment that recalled a thousand terrible images to his mind, he did not dread the sudden appearance of aught supernatural ; but he felt a species of indescribable awe—an aversion to close his eyes—a nervousness that made him start at each trivial sound—which the bravest occasionally feel when in peculiar situations, and which are invariably experienced during a vigil by the side of a corpse.

It was in vain that he endeavoured to change the subject of his reflections. Imagination is often obstinate, as well as fanciful ; and we may occasionally essay to turn the rush of torrents from their course, or to roil back the Alpine avalanche, with the same chance of success as hope to banish unpleasant ideas, in order to make room for felicitous

ones. The gory head of François rolling away from the platform of the *guillotine*—the disfigured trunk that remained upon the horizontal plank—the shapeless mass of dead flesh which had fallen at his feet during the riot, and which he knew was the massacred body of Edouard—then the solemn silence of the chamber, the dim flickering of the candle, the dubious shadows it cast upon the wall, and the low respiration of Belle-Rose, who, having changed his position, breathed hard no longer—all these agitated the mind of De Rosann, and expelled every inclination to slumber.

“This is childish!” he at length exclaimed, as he caught himself looking fearfully round the room after a sudden noise: “I scarcely know what I am doing—to be terrified at the sound of a mouse, or the creaking of the timber—perhaps a beam opening, and evacuating confined air, a circumstance which often happens in old houses:”—and he endeavoured to laugh at his folly, but the echo returned his mirth in such dismal reverberations, that they resembled human groans—or at least his fancy invented the similitude. “And there are strangers in the spacious dwelling,” continued he, musing aloud: “how ridiculous it would be to disturb them with my idle fears. Still this room is lonely—a murderer has slept—that is to say, lodged here; for sleep could not have visited his eyes.—A gentleman and two ladies—in a carriage, with a servant—to condescend to honour these miserable walls with their presence!—It would have been as well had that Louis Dorval not troubled us with his tale about poor François—the unfortunate old man, who was betrayed by Edouard, and was guillotined but so short a time ago. Every one sleeps—Belle-Rose sleeps—all eyes in this house are closed save mine; and I cannot sleep. The idea of that old man—with his grey hair—and they did not respect those hoary locks—but they severed his head from his body! And here am I, like the hero of some romance, shut up in a haunted chamber, and afraid of my own shadow: not even like the hero—for the first thing universally done in such situations is to examine the apartment—an operation I have not yet had the courage to perform.”

Pleased with the idea, which partially renovated his sinking spirits, De Rosann seized the candle, and walked round the room on tip-toe. On each side of a spacious fire-place were large cupboards, with doors carved in an antique style, standing half opened, and revealing the dusty shelves within. Alfred cast a hasty glance into the first; but, as he expected, found nothing. He then proceeded to the second, and was about to retire after even a slighter investigation than he had bestowed on the former recess, when a small bundle of papers, entirely covered with dust, met his eyes. A sudden idea struck him—rapidly as the flash of lightning darts across the vaulted heaven. He placed the candle on the mantle-piece, for table there was none; and having assured himself that Belle-Rose slept, he drew the packet from the corner wherein it lurked. A thick piece of parchment, that had already materially suffered from the damps, enveloped a quantity of papers, many of which were half destroyed by age or vermin: several of them were, however, still legible, and one or two existed entire, having escaped the tooth of the mouse, and the undying hand of time. De Rosann cast a hasty glance over the first that came to hand—the word “DENNEVILLE” met

his eye! Not a doubt that these were the documents of which François made mention in his tale, remained in his mind; and he hailed the possession of those papers with an internal satisfaction, and a feeling of delight, that he could not account for.

His first impulse was to sit down and decypher one of the letters, for such the documents proved to be: but at that moment a voice within him appeared to ask, "If he were justified in perusing those papers, and in retaining possession of them? Was he certain no relative to the deceased marquis still existed? and if there were any surviving scions of the ancient family, would it not be a robbery to withhold deeds that were perhaps important?" These reflections made De Rosann hesitate; and then the fear that Belle-Rose might awake and suspect the nature of his occupation, determined him to refrain from satisfying his curiosity, at least for the present. He accordingly divided the papers into two or three parcels, concealed them about his person, and carefully burnt the parchment which had enveloped them, as well as a few scraps where the writing was totally illegible, or where there had never been any.

No sooner had De Rosann concluded this arrangement, than a strange suspicion entered his mind that Belle-Rose was not asleep. He gently approached the bed, and gazed upon the features of his companion; but not the slightest evidence appeared to support the supposition. Belle-Rose slumbered tranquilly on his pillow—De Rosann coughed somewhat loudly—and the noise produced no effect. Our hero accordingly retreated towards his own couch, satisfied that Belle-Rose did not feign the deep sleep in which he was apparently wrapped.

And now a long train of reflections was again awakened in the mind of De Rosann. Two circumstances appeared to exercise a vast influence over his future fortunes. The documents he had just possessed himself of, and the secret service in which he was engaged, were the arbiters of his destiny. But what was that secret service? who was Leblond? and where were the all-seeing, the omniscient powers he was engaged to serve? In the most civilised country on the face of the earth, and in an enlightened age, a species of freemasonry appeared to exist, which could control the actions of the functionaries of the government itself—which could emancipate criminals and the condemned at will—which, with influence as great as it was invisible, could protect its votaries in the far-off provinces, and which slumbered in tranquillity and safety like the train in the terrible mine, which will shortly explode and involve in ruin those beneath whose very feet it has long been working unsuspected and secure. But the more De Rosann pondered upon this subject, the more was he lost in conjecture and doubt; a strange presentiment, however, told him that his own destinies were to be worked out by those of others; and all his bewildered mind could resolve upon was to follow the stream of that fate which would either carry him onward to success and fortune or to a condition of woe and despair.

CHAPTER XIV.

VARIOUS ENCOUNTERS.

WHEN the condition of an individual is apparently the most forlorn and pitiable—when the dark horizon of his own sphere is illuminated with not one single gleam of hope—when the dark clouds of despair hover around him—and when his mind is reduced to the lowest ebb of despondency and sorrow, how suddenly may a bright meteor dart across that gloomy horizon—how rapidly may the rays of the rising sun dispel those dark clouds around him—and how quickly may hope and gladness elate that mind, which only a few moments before entertained almost the ideas of the darkly-brooding suicide. These are periods in the lives of all individuals: there breathes not a man of advanced age, who has not had his chequered and sad moments as well as his joyous and glad ones: but the hour of bitterness, when the gall is the most nauseous, is the precursor of one of change, in which the cup shall be filled with honey.

The possession of the mysterious papers quite changed the current of De Rosann's thoughts. He felt that were he to retire to his bed, he could now taste the sweets of repose, and imitate the example of his companion. He no longer cast terrified glances round the dismal and naked walls of the haunted apartment; the slightest sound failed to startle him as it had done a quarter of an hour before. He therefore determined to avail himself of the few hours that intervened between the present moment and the morning, and seek a partial indemnification for the gloomy vigils he had hitherto kept. But scarcely was his mind made up to court the favours of Morpheus, when the sudden loud barking of Azor called him to the window, and at the same moment awoke Belle-Rose, who started up, rubbed his eyes, and inquired the reason of so unseemly a clamour.

"I can discover nothing," said De Rosann, hanging half-way out of the window which he had opened, and looking around with straining eyes.

"What! you have not been in bed, then?" exclaimed Belle-Rose, noticing that his companion was still drest.

"I have not taken off my clothes," returned De Rosann. "But can you conceive the cause of this incessant barking? The dog evidently hears or sees something strange."

"What o'clock do you suppose it to be?" inquired Belle-Rose.

"About one, or half past," was the reply.

"Impossible, my dear fellow! See how light it is."

"And yet that glare is quite sudden," remarked De Rosann; "it is not the dawn of morning: all round the eastern horizon, where it should be light, the clouds are quite dark; and immediately above our heads, there is a strange lustre."

"*Mille bombes!* De Rosann," ejaculated Belle-Rose, after a pause of some minutes; "do you not find the atmosphere very oppressive?"

"I thought so, and was about to notice the circumstance: there is moreover a suffocating smell."

"And that smell is of fire, as sure as we are living men!" cried Belle-Rose, hastily quitting the window, and putting on his clothes with all possible despatch.

"The dog barks incessantly," observed De Rosann: "the light increases above the house, and the air becomes heavier: I am certain there is a fire somewhere."

"Wait one instant for me, and we will descend the stairs together: if there be any danger, we can alarm the inmates of the house; if not, we may return quietly to our beds."

But the intentions of Belle-Rose were anticipated: for at the moment he had uttered the last syllable of these words, the voice of Louis Dorval was heard in the enclosure below, crying out "Fire! fire!"—then the noise of his footsteps, as he ascended the stairs, and rushed up and down the corridor, knocking at the doors, and repeating his terrible call, showed that he was on the alert.

Not, when in the prisons of the Inquisition the awful command to prepare for the celebration of the *auto-da-fé* was passed round to those who were condemned to suffer—nor, when in the gallant vessel, that laboured to the storm, the heart-rending shout of "A rock! a rock!" echoed along the sea-washed decks—not even there did those appalling news create more terror, than was experienced by the female inmates of the farm-house, as the fearful warning which Dorval gave at every door met their ears.

Belle-Rose and De Rosann descended to the yard to ascertain which part of the house was on fire, and whether it were not possible to arrest the progress of the ravaging element. But the whole of the roof was enveloped in flames, that ascended in high and bright columns like the eruption from the mounts of *Ætna* or *Vesuvius*. The immediate vicinity of the spacious dwelling was as light as day; and the glare was almost too dazzling for the eye to support. There was not a breath of wind to agitate or excite the fire; but the house was old, rafters and beams of wood had been chiefly used in erecting it, and an immense quantity of straw occupied a portion of the loft, or *grenier*, between the second floor and the angular roof. There was consequently ample fuel to feed the spreading flames; and our hero and his comrade soon saw the impossibility of saving the house from an entire conflagration.

Having mournfully and hastily satisfied themselves on this head, they immediately turned their attention to the saving of the furniture, and to assist the two ladies, and the sick wife of the unfortunate Dorval, to escape from the burning pile in safety. The farmer himself behaved like a man of courage and resolution on the occasion. He saw as well as De Rosann and Belle-Rose that it was ridiculous to think of stopping the fire; and instead of giving way to useless grief, he bestirred himself to extricate as much of his property as he was able from the building, which would soon be a heap of ruins. Fortunately his wife, by means of an extraordinary exertion, was enabled to rise from her bed as she was, and walk slowly down stairs; but the poor woman appeared to





For the

be stupified with alarm and horror at the dreadful loss her husband would experience; and no sooner did she arrive in the open air, than she fainted. Belle-Rose and Dorval placed the helpless female in a chair, and conveyed her to an adjoining barn, where they administered the proper remedies to recover her.

In the meantime De Rosann had re-entered the house, and sought the apartments of the ladies, naturally supposing that the one, whose ankle was sprained, would require assistance. Just as he was about to knock at the first door, it was thrown open, and the younger of the ladies rushed out, calling loudly for the servant and the gentleman that accompanied them. There was no candle in the corridor; but the glare of the flames rendered it as light as day. De Rosann cast one glance upon the beautiful girl who had issued from the chamber—that fairy form, that lovely face, that melodious voice were too well impressed upon his memory ever to be forgotten—he uttered an exclamation of joy—and in a moment Eloise was clasped in the arms of her lover.

“Your mother and uncle are with you?” inquired Alfred hastily.

“Yes—but you, dear Alfred—how have you escaped from that odious place?” inquired Eloise, forgetful at the instant of all the world save him she adored.

“To-morrow—presently—I will tell you all, dear Eloise,” answered the young man; “at this moment let us think of your mother.”

And with these words he imprinted another kiss upon the chaste brow of that affectionate girl, then gently disengaged himself from her fervent embrace, and hurried into the room to assist the parent of his beloved Eloise.

“Do not be astonished at my presence here, Mrs. Clayton!” cried De Rosann; “but haste and save yourself, for the fire gains upon us.”

“Alfred de Rosann!” exclaimed the mother, sinking back in her chair, as if she were confronted by a spectre.

“Yes—’tis I, madam,” returned the youth: “hasten, I pray you—we can talk anon—this is no time or place for explanation. Support yourself well on my arm—Eloise, assist your mother the other side—and now away from this chamber.”

Mrs. Clayton was scarcely able to walk, her ankle pained her to such a degree; and the party would have moved onwards but slowly, had not Mr. Clayton stepped forward and made his niece resign her place to him. His astonishment on recognizing De Rosann was equal to that of his companions when they first respectively saw the young man, whom they deemed to be shackled in an ignominious gaol; but his joy equalled his astonishment, and he addressed a few words of kindness to our hero in the most affectionate manner. Eloise inwardly thanked the good man who had exemplified so unequivocal a proof of his regard for her and her lover; and she sighed heavily when she thought of the different welcome Alfred had received from her mother.

Arrived with difficulty in the court-yard, Mrs. Clayton was conducted to the out-house, where the farmer’s wife already lay on a bed hastily contrived of mattresses, &c., as those objects were saved piecemeal from the ravages of the fire. It was a species of barn, in which the ladies were fain to take refuge; and being situate at a little distance from the house, there was no danger of the fires communicating to its roof,

which was composed of thatched straw, as is usual with buildings of the kind.

Eloise did all she possibly could to console her suffering parent, while De Rosann joined Belle-Rose and Dorval in their herculean task of removing the furniture from the burning house to the extremity of the enclosure, so that the falling firebrands might not reach any inflammable matter. Mr. Clayton aided the servant in securing the trunks and goods which had been brought from the carriage and transported to the apartments whence himself and the ladies were now exiled by the conflagration.

Meantime the fire had rapidly increased, and a great portion of the roof had already fallen in. The red flames emitted volumes of black smoke, pieces of burning wood fell in all directions, and the progress of the destructive element resembled the sound of a distant tide flowing in on a beachy shore without the occasional intervals caused by the reacting ebb. The countenances of those who laboured hard to save the effects of the unfortunate Louis Dorval, were rendered hideous by the glare of yellow light that gave an unnatural tinge to every thing within its scope; and their figures, increased to gigantic stature in the deceptive lustre, appeared to be those of devils hovering round an accursed furnace, in which the souls of the damned were suffering endless torments.

Presently the entire roof gave way with a hideous crash; and for an instant the flames appeared to be totally extinguished, a thick cloud of smoke ascending in their place. Then all was dark and sombre: but in a minute the fire burst forth with renewed vigour, as a combatant returns to the charge more furiously after a momentary rest. So terrible was the heat, that the farmer and his generous assistants were at length obliged to retire from the immediate vicinity of the house, having rescued nearly every thing from the increasing desolation: the panes of glass melted away from their frames, and did not break; rafters, planks, and tiles fell with appalling din; smoke mingled with flame—staircases and floors gave way—the bare walls alone remained.

Morning now dawned on the pile of ruins, and the beams of the rising sun glanced upon the devastation as if it were still the large and joyous dwelling that greeted their presence the day before. Alas! what a change had taken place in a few short hours: a single night was sufficient to rob the unfortunate Louis Dorval of half his little possessions. When too late, he recollected that his own carelessness must have caused the fire; he had ascended to the loft with a candle to fetch the mattresses for Belle-Rose and De Rosann; a spark had most probably caught the straw that was piled there in quantities; and the ruin of his paternal dwelling might be traced to one of those combinations of circumstances over which mankind has apparently no control.

At a distance of about a hundred yards from the out-house or barn where the females had taken refuge, was situate the stable. Belle-Rose, who had worked like a slave in the cause of the farmer, and who found that he could do no more good by standing idly in the neighbourhood of the smoking ruins, joyfully hailed a manger as a comfortable couch "for the rest of the night," to use a common expression, although the sun had already risen above the eastern horizon. He quietly opened the door; and having assured himself that there were no dogs to dispute

his right of entrance into the sorry abode, he was about to betake himself to a bundle of hay which was spread in the midst of 'he stable, when he recollected that De Rosann might also stand in need of sleep. He accordingly sallied forth, and made known his discovery to our hero, who was far from displeased at the prospect of enjoying an hour's repose, not having closed his eyes the whole night. They entered the stable, and carefully shut the door to expel the advances of the morning air, which imparted a shivering to their frames, and penetrated to the very marrow of their bones. Having taken this precaution, and wished each other a comfortable slumber, they lay down together upon the inviting hay; but their bed apparently possessed a considerable degree of elasticity; for by a sudden movement, which agitated the bundle from its very foundation, they were both hurled off, and thrown violently one on one side, and one on the other. Belle-Rose stretched out his arm to save himself, and his clenched fist encountered something, neither hard nor soft, that seemed to bear a most remarkable resemblance to the cheek of a human being. A momentary terror seized upon him—he thought he had encountered the touch of a dead body; but a loud cry, which he well knew did not proceed from the lips of De Rosann, reassured him on this head, and he started on his feet to search for the individual who had alarmed him. In an instant the whole bundle of hay flew to the other extremity of the stable, exposing to the view of our hero and his companion the elongated countenance and petrified form of the gastronomer, Champignon.

The astonishment of Belle-Rose and De Rosann, when the lengthened countenance of Champignon met their eyes, may be well conceived; nor did the gastronomer, on his part, omit a few ejaculations, expressive of wonder at being thus discovered by his two *quondam* acquaintances. A more ludicrous scene cannot be easily imagined. They all three stared at each other with their mouths wide open, undecided whether to put an end to the ridicule of the situation in which they found themselves by a hearty laugh, or by immediate questions and answers of explanation. Champignon, particularly, would have excited the risible muscles of the most sedate and saturnine being in the world. His small grey eyes were dilated to an unusual extent, so that his very forehead was contracted into a thousand wrinkles; pieces of straw and hay were mingled with his unkempt hair; his lips apart “grinned horribly a ghastly smile,” like Milton's Death, displaying two rows of large white teeth, almost reaching from ear to ear. He had raised himself to a sitting posture the moment his tegument of hay was mercilessly kicked off him. His hands were lifted up in mute marvel, and his legs were crouched under his corpulent person. It was impossible to gaze at him without a smile; but Belle-Rose, who was the most unceremonious man in existence, did not content himself with so simple a relaxation of his now serious countenance; he burst into a loud laugh, to the additional confusion of the gastronomer; and as we naturally exhibit more feeling and sincere sympathy in a fellow-creature's mirth than in his distress, De Rosann soon imitated the facetious Pierre, and regaled himself at the expense of Champignon, in repeated shouts of hilarity, which brought tears to his eyes.

“Nothing could have been better!” exclaimed Belle-Rose; “I would not have lost this sight for all the world.”

"Your jocularly would have been more adroitly placed, methinks," returned Champignon gravely, "after a substantial breakfast. An empty stomach is not good to laugh upon."

"Did you not sup last night, then, before you lay down to rest in the manger?" inquired De Rosann.

"In truth, did I, and the raging of my appetite was assuaged with viands that I cooked myself," answered the gastronome, a smile of satisfaction playing on his countenance; "still it is no reason why we should not breakfast."

"Breakfast at daybreak!" cried Belle-Rose.

"Ah. is it so early? I awoke about an hour ago—to the best of my recollection—and fancied the sun was rising; but not having recovered from the fatigues I endured yesterday, I determined to indulge in a little more sleep; and in order to do so with additional comfort, I ensconced myself beneath the hay, of which you have just disencumbered me."

"*Parbleu!* he has mistaken the glow occasioned by the fire, for the rising of the sun!" ejaculated Belle-Rose.

"Fire!" echoed Champignon, starting from his unpleasant posture, and seating himself in an easier one, while Belle-Rose proceeded to relate the circumstances attending the dreadful conflagration, of which our readers are already aware.

"You did not save any of the cold turkey you alluded to?" asked Champignon, when Pierre had terminated his tale.

"God knows!" replied Belle-Rose carelessly. "By the bye," he added, after a moment's pause, "since I have had the good nature to satisfy your curiosity, my worthy friend of the Cadran Rouge, you may as well do the same good office towards us, and recount the particulars of your escape from the *bagne*, whereat you commenced to be a mighty favourite. I cannot answer for De Rosann; but as far as regards myself, I do not experience the slightest inclination to sleep. The singularity of this encounter has quite banished all ideas of seeking repose from my mind; and I shall listen to your narrative with pleasure."

"Not for worlds would I forego the proposed amusement," said De Rosann; "so let us seat ourselves on the hay, and attend to adventures which can be no otherwise than amusing."

"As for adventures," cried Champignon, "God knows I have passed through enough of them in a little space of time; and if you will promise not to interrupt me, for I cannot bear interruptions, your curiosity shall be immediately gratified."

"Do not be alarmed on that head," answered Belle-Rose; "I myself am attention personified, and De Rosann will readily give the assurance you require;—so no more nonsense, and commence."

"I always made it a rule in my kitchen"—began Champignon, assuming an important air.

"For God's sake," cried Belle-Rose, "let alone your kitchen during a short half hour, and tell us how you effected your escape from Brest."

"Notwithstanding your promises, you interrupted me before I had completed ten words," said the gastronome sulkily.

"Because your prelude seemed to menace a long culinary dissertation," returned Belle Rose; "and much as I respect your talents in that

line, I do not see the necessity of beginning a history of adventures with a paragraph from the cookery-book."

"Be so kind as to suffer me to proceed in my own way," persisted Champignon, "or to hold my tongue at once and for all. I was saying that I made it an invariable rule in my kitchen, at the Cadran Rouge, which, as you may recollect, was set up in opposition to the monopoly so unjustly maintained by the Cadran Bleu—"

"In the name of God, what has that to do with your flight from the galleys?" ejaculated Belle-Rose, impatiently.

"It has a great deal to do with my history," returned Champignon, annoyed at being interrupted a second time.

"Not if you commence from the 22nd of May, 1830, the day of François' execution, of Edouard's murder, and of our escape," said Belle-Rose.

"Only permit me to complete my first sentence, and you will in a moment perceive the bearing and purport of the words with which I commenced my tale."

"Endeavour to restrain your impatience, my dear Belle-Rose," said De Rosann; "or we shall never get to the end of the narrative."

"Proceed, then," muttered Pierre; "and give us as little about your dishes, and as much about yourself, as you possibly can."

"You shall be obeyed," answered Champignon: "Attend. I had established it as an invariable rule in my kitchen, at the Cadran Rouge, that to do things well, the strictest order and regularity must be observed, even in the most trifling matters: the same rule will be now applied to my entertaining history."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Belle-Rose, fervently.

The *πρὸ λέγομενα* being achieved," added De Rosann.

"I was chained to an individual," continued Champignon, heedless of these remarks, "who seemed determined to assist the most tumultuous of his companions, instead of acting as a peace-maker and mediator. I ventured to remonstrate with him on the depravity of such conduct; but he told me it was not Sunday, that he did not understand preaching, and that if I could not hold my tongue he would apply something to my mouth, to close it effectually. At that instant, a sudden movement on the part of the general mass gave us so violent a shock, that our shackles were pulled different ways, and caused us a momentary pain. My comrade was furious; he swore that I lagged behind on purpose to annoy him; and when I opened my lips to utter an assurance to the contrary, he gave me such a blow with the flat of his hand, that I fell to the ground, dragging my brutal assailant after me. He cursed and swore like a mad-man, because the pressure of the crowd knocked us one against the other, and prevented us from rising. While we were thus plunging about in the dirt, my eye caught sight of a small shining object that lay near me. I picked it up, and instantly recognised one of those keys which were used to lock our chains. You may laugh, gentlemen," said Champignon, noticing that Belle-Rose and De Rosann exchanged certain glances, the significance of which he totally misunderstood; "but I can assure you it is a fact. How the key came there, God only knows: it was however a key, and a very useful one; for it unlocked my side of the chain in a moment,

and thus allowed me to rise from the ground. My companion could not fancy how I had liberated myself: and I persuaded him, that the weakness of the lock alone must have accidentally separated me from him. Had he been an object worthy of commiseration, I should have immediately entrusted him with the secret. As it was, I kept my own counsel, and gradually edged off to as great a distance from the brutal convict as possible, till I at length found myself close to the door communicating with the hall, at the extremity of which is situate the principal entrance to the prison. At that moment, the pressure of the crowd was very great in the spot where I was standing; and several Gendarmes and soldiers were forcing their way through the multitude to arrest the most riotous, and to compel the others to cease from encouraging the disorder. No one paid any attention to me, because I remained tranquil; but I gazed intently on all that was passing in the vicinity of the door. Presently I noticed a terrible scuffle between a convict and a Gendarme. You may probably recollect that on account of the dreadful chill of the morning, the Gendarmes arrived in their cloaks. The one who was now wrestling with the galley-slave, was encumbered by his. A sudden motion, however, soon deprived him of it, and the mantle rolled almost under my feet. In an instant his cocked hat followed the cloak—the scuffle continued—no one took any notice of the fallen objects—and presently another movement of the crowd left a clear space opposite the door. I hastily put on the cloak and the hat, knocked as loudly as I could at the gate, and when it was opened, rushed into the hall, crying, ‘The guard! the guard!’ Neither the turnkeys nor the sentries suspected my intentions—they took me for a real Gendarme—my trousers escaped their notice—and the front door was immediately thrown open to afford me egress.”

“Bravo!” cried Belle-Rose, unable to contain his admiration: “give me your hand, Champignon; I did not think you capable, my brave fellow, of so daring a deed. ’Twas excellent—delicious!”

“Ah! ah!” chuckled the gastronomer; “we do things well, when we have a mind, eh?”

“You are a man of wonderful parts!”

“My name will yet be handed down to posterity,” cried Champignon, delighted with the adulation of Belle-Rose. “Only wait till my *cotelettes à la quadrille* get into vogue, and Europe shall talk of me.”

“The journals mention your name already,” said Pierre.

“Indeed! you do not mean what you say, my dear, kind, good Belle-Rose. Oh! if I knew the manner in which they speak of me! of course it is to praise my gastronomical knowledge. But which journal is it that does me so much honour!” enquired the delighted Champignon.

“Most likely the *Armoricaïn de Brest*,” answered Belle-Rose drily.

“Is it possible that my fame could have followed me from Paris?”

“Not that I know of,” replied Pierre; “neither have I seen the Brest newspaper; but you may rely upon one thing—which is,





A Singular Visitor.

that you, myself, and De Rosann, with our full descriptions, have already figured as fugitive convicts amongst its advertising columns."

"And that is the way my name has been brought before the public, then," said Champignon in a melancholy tone of voice.

"Exactly," returned Belle-Rose with an emphasis on his laconic answer, that increased the disappointment of the *ex-restaurateur*.

"But pray continue your interesting narrative," exclaimed De Rosann; "you left off in the most entertaining part: I am dying to hear how you escaped from the town in your Gendarme's cloak and cocked hat"

"If you choose to pay attention, and neither interrupt me with adulation nor with blame, I will conclude the history of my adventures," said Champignon; and having received the promise demanded, he proceeded as follows. "No sooner had I left the prison walls, than I hurried down two or three streets as quickly as my legs would carry me, uncertain whither to go, a perfect stranger in Brest, and fearful of being arrested every moment. At length I saw an old-clothes shop in a narrow lane; and knowing that I must entrust my secret to somebody to procure a change of raiment, I rushed into the house, knocked down a chair in which a large cat was reposing, trampled on the paw of a surly dog, that commenced a barking deafening to the ear, and ran against an old man who issued from a chamber adjoining his shop, to ascertain the meaning of so extraordinary a disturbance. At first he was purple through intensity of ire; but I gradually succeeded in pacifying his wrath; and he listened to my tale with the greatest attention. The Gendarme's cloak was almost new, and the cocked hat was in tolerable condition. I offered them in exchange for any suit of clothes he chose to give me; and a bargain was soon made to our mutual satisfaction. Just as I was about to leave the shop, the old man enquired if I had a passport;—'Because,' said he, 'on account of the disturbance in the *bagne*, no one will be permitted to leave the town without producing his papers.'—I frankly confessed I had none; and my dilemma appeared to be as great as ever: but in a moment an idea struck me, and I addressed the salesman as follows:—'My worthy friend and benefactor,' said I, 'you must not do things by halves, nor suffer a fellow-creature to be arrested for want of a little assistance. You have accommodated me with a seedy coat and a patched pair of pantaloons, and you may as well lend me your passport. There is not much difference between us—except that I am somewhat younger and better-looking—and your nose is most infernally crooked; added to which I might notice a slight squint—but, barring those defects, you are as like me as a couple of fowls or a pair of partridges.'—The old man saw he could not get rid of me unless he acceded to my request; and he knew if I were arrested in his shop, it would go hard with him for having afforded protection to a *forçat évadé*; so he generously handed over his passport, and wished me a pleasant journey. I thanked him, and sallied forth not exactly in search of adventures, but to avoid them as much as possible."

"Never was there a less Quixotic plan, nor one coupled at the same time with more difficulty," interrupted Belle-Rose

“ Stay—and let us hear the result,” said De Rosann.

“ I succeeded in passing through the gates of the town,” continued Champignon, “ by the aid of the old clothesman’s passport, notwithstanding the strict examination to which it was subjected. Under the denomination of *signes particulières** was mentioned its late owner’s habit of squinting; and I experienced the greatest difficulty in looking at my nose with my left eye during the five minutes that the Gendarmes wasted in comparing my person with the descriptive items of the false passport. No sooner had I obtained permission to continue my journey, than the roar of the canon from the citadel deafened my ears, and produced as great an effect upon me as did the fall of a tray, on which was an excellent dinner of my own cooking, one fine day, at the Cadran Rouge. To my astonishment the guns gave warning of the escape of three convicts; and I recollect saying to myself, as I turned into a thick wood at a little distance from the *glacis*, ‘ How I wish that the other two—myself being safe—were the worthy Messieurs De Rosann and Belle-Rose!’—You appear incredulous; but it is as true as that I can serve up a *dejeuner à la fourchette* better than any man in Christendom.”

“ We believe you,” said Belle-Rose, “ having made the same remark relative to yourself: so proceed.”

“ The moment I entered the wood, instead of hastening towards the middle as quickly as I could, I turned immediately to the right; and seeing a dense thicket close by, I concealed myself within its friendly mazes, sagely concluding that when the Gendarmes went to search the shady labyrinth of trees, they would not look in the mere outskirts for the object of their visit. Seated upon some dead leaves, I put my right hand to my forehead, and my left hand to my hip, as is my custom when I am about to debate within my own mind on any important matter—such as the various dishes that ought to compose the different courses of a *diner soigné*, or the articles in the bill to which I could best add a few extra francs without exciting the suspicion of a guest—and began seriously to consider what steps I ought to take in my present forlorn predicament. Having reflected at least three hours without coming to any positive decision, save that I must look out for a dinner, which I should have had no objection to cook myself, if any one had supplied me with aliments and materials, I left my thicket, and walked slowly into the recesses of the wood. Presently, to my joy and delight, a cottage met my eyes. I moved towards it, and stood ten minutes at the door without venturing to knock. At length it suddenly opened, and a little girl made her appearance on the threshold. She was startled when she saw me; I, however, addressed her in that gentle tone which I can assume at pleasure, and requested somewhat to eat. My piteous harangue was, however, cut short by the sight of a blear-eyed old woman, with a pipe in her mouth, puffing away like a steam-packet. She did not, however, mean to interrupt me; but merely stepped forward to

* Particular marks about the person; such as scars, the traces of the small-pox, lameness, &c. &c.

listen. I renewed all my plaintive and touching representations, declared I was a soldier who had been at Algiers, and had just returned from a dreadful campaign. The little girl, with a certain comical expression of countenance, asked me if the province of Madagascar were not in a state of revolution, and if the king of China had not made war against the French. These questions startled me a little—but supposing that the news were authentic, that the little girl had heard of them by some means or other, and that an old soldier should not be ignorant of such important political events, I replied boldly in the affirmative, adding that I had myself been employed against the Chinese. The girl smiled, and renewed her questions, which were more extraordinary than the others; namely, ‘whether I had seen the king of China, whether he did not stand ten feet high, and whether his cattle were not dressed in steel jackets and wadded pelisses?’ I began to fancy that the child had a mind to banter me, and accordingly thought to humour her whims by continually answering *yes* to every thing she said. In the middle of the conversation a sturdy peasant came up, and was saluted by the name of ‘Father’ on the part of the little girl. He asked my business; I told him the same tale I had already narrated to his daughter and the old woman; and the mischievous Jeannette—for so her father called her—added all the wonders about the Chinese, Madagascar, *et cetera, et cetera*. When she had concluded, I looked towards the peasant to ascertain the impression such marvels had made upon him; but he turned sharply round, muttered a remark about the increase of liars in the world, and told me to go to the devil, as coolly as I am now talking to you.”

De Rosann and Belle-Rose had hitherto maintained a certain gravity during the latter part of Champignon’s recital: but when he mentioned the indignation of the cottager, whom they both recognised as the Draconic Claude, it was impossible to suppress their laughter any longer. Champignon thought it was occasioned by the singularity of his adventures, and joined in the mirth of his companions till tears ran down his cheeks.

“You may suppose that I was not very well pleased with the answer of the brutal peasant to my courteous language,” continued Champignon, when order was re-established in the stable—for the reader must not forget where this narrative was told: “but I was obliged to retire from the cottage, although not to visit the black gentleman to whom I was so uncivilly recommended. The whole of that weary day did I wander about the wood, and at night-fall, just as I had made up my mind to emerge into the open fields, a sudden rustling amongst the leaves, succeeded by violent shouts of laughter, made me again take to a rapid flight and conceal myself for another hour. When those sixty long minutes had expired, I sallied forth once more; and after a tolerably tedious walk, I at length came to a large cottage, where lights were still burning. I knocked, and was this time received with civility, if not with absolute kindness. According to my native modesty, I merely requested an outhouse, or the pigstye, to sleep in, naturally ex-

pecting to be offered a bed. But the peasant, to whom the cottage belonged, took me at my word, and conducted your humble servant to the pigstye. To indemnify me, however, for this bad lodging, he produced a copious supper, which was not indifferently cooked, by the bye—and the following morning he made me a present of a suit of clothes, because my own were rather dirty, on account of a battle which took place between me and the pig.”

“And then what became of you?” enquired Belle-Rose, seeing that Champignon hesitated.

“You shall hear in a moment: but first, allow me to recover a little breath.”

“As much as you like,” returned Belle-Rose: “only make haste, for it will shortly be time for us to think of breakfast.”

“In that case,” said Champignon, “I am at your service: listen. Nothing of importance occurred the day before yesterday—nor yesterday, until the evening. I begged a dinner at about two or three o’clock from some worthy peasants, who did not inundate me with stupid questions, and then tell me to go to the devil, like the uncouth father of little Jeannette: but they gave me some soup, in which they had not put enough salt, and some *bouilli* boiled to rags. I, however, accepted their bounty with many thanks, and merely hinted to them the defects I found in the cookery of the viands, that they might improve by my advice on future occasions. They did not appear very well pleased with these insinuations, and muttered something about ‘beggars not being choosers.’ I repeated my thanks, and walked onwards, tolerably satisfied with the meal. It was my wish to reach St. Malo last night, as I have a cousin residing in that town, to whom I had an opportunity of rendering some pecuniary service in the days of the Cadran Rouge; and I know he will receive me with kindness till I establish myself once more in a place, where by change of name, or other precautions, I can avoid the cunning of the Gendarmes. But about nine o’clock I found myself again overtaken by hunger, and was obliged to solicit a supper at a cottage not half an hour’s walk from this very spot. I was well received by a young man and his wife, who invited me to enter and partake of their repast. The viands, which were not yet cooked, were produced; and to my astonishment I saw displayed upon the table a rabbit, three or four woodcocks, and a hare.* A moment’s reflection told me that my host was doubtless a poacher, such excellent cheer being considerably at variance with the miserable appearance of the hut. I did not, however, make any allusion to his supposed profession, but volunteered my services to dress the provisions, telling the man and his wife that I was the first cook in Europe, as they should soon have good reason to know. The supper was speedily submitted to the indispensable agency of the fire, and a short time saw the comestibles so exquisitely arranged, as to be capable of tempting the daintiest appetites that formerly visited the Cadran Rouge. The founders of the feast were in raptures; they had no idea of the

* The French eat game throughout the year.

necessity of a toast underneath, and of vine-leaves on the breasts of the woodcocks, nor of the manner in which a hare should be trussed. Indeed, the woman herself acknowledged to me, during the meal, that she had often boiled her game for the sake of variety. Her husband was in a particularly good humour; and as he sipped his sour wine after supper, he pressed me so earnestly to tell him my whole history, that I candidly confessed my escape from the galleys, and my anxiety to reach St. Malo. At the word *galleys* he became furious. His wife endeavoured to appease her husband's wrath: but he swore that if he had known he was entertaining a fugitive convict, he would have kicked me out long ago. 'By the God who made me,' he cried, 'I shall never forget this disgrace.'—'Are you not a poacher?' said I; 'and do you not daily run the chance of going to Brest yourself?'—'Audacious scoundrel!' returned the man, his choler rising to so dreadful a degree, that I was glad to escape from the reach of his violence. But before I was beyond ear-shot, I heard him quarrelling with his wife, who said in a taunting tone, 'You know you have been twice to the galleys already; and you reproach that unfortunate stranger for the same thing.'—'That is the very reason why we must endeavour to appear more scrupulous in the eyes of the world,' was the answer. I did not stay to listen to their conversation farther; but left the vicinity of the cottage with all possible speed, congratulating myself on the good supper I had cooked and partaken of. In half an hour I heard the barking of the dog at this farm-house; and by a circuitous route obtained access to the stable in which I have had the honour to encounter my present companions."

"Never have I heard more pleasant adventures," cried Belle-Rose, when Champignon had ceased speaking: "and I thank you particularly, my worthy knight-errant, for having interlarded your discourse with as few culinary ideas as possible. All things have their proper places; and be assured that you ought not to mix peppercorns with pudding, nor ashes with bread."

"I understand your allusion," returned Champignon, who relished advice about as little as did the peasants he described in his history as having forgotten salt to their soup.

"And now it is my turn to fill up a few blanks that occur in the course of your narrative, Champignon," said De Rosann. "Do you know, that the key which liberated you, did the same kind office for us, and must have been dropped by accident; that the questions of Jeannette, relative to the Chinese and Madagascar, were occasioned by some extravagant tales of Belle-Rose; that the rustling you heard in the wood was caused by me, and the laughter emanated from both of us; and that you were allowed to sleep in the pig-stye, because we occupied the only bed-room the worthy peasant had to spare?"

"Impossible!" cried Champignon, his countenance expressive of unfeigned astonishment. "This is evidently the work of destiny!"

"It is very easily accounted for," answered De Rosann. "You escape from the galleys half-an-hour or an hour after we have se-

cured ourselves by flight—you take the same road that was adopted by us—and you stop at the same cottages, because they are more or less in your way.”

“Your solution is very just,” remarked Champignon; “and by the same reasoning, if there were no people to dine abroad, there would be no *restaurants*; if there were no *restaurants*, the Cadran Rouge would not have existed; and if the Cadran Rouge had not existed, I should not have been sent to the galleys.”

“All that is perfectly true, *Messieurs*,” exclaimed Belle-Rose; “but the sun is high in the heavens, the morning dews have been dissipated, and the hour for breakfast is arrived.”

“That said cold turkey and ham,” began Champignon, “would not be bad, if—”

“One of the ladies is already in the yard,” interrupted Belle-Rose, gazing from a low window towards the ruins of Louis Dorval’s ancestral dwelling.

“Ah! there is Eloise,” cried De Rosann; and, to the astonishment of his two companions, he rushed past them, and ran abruptly out of the stable.

CHAPTER XV.

MR. CLAYTON.

ELOISE was somewhat pale after the alarms of the night, and her heart was filled with mingled joy and sorrow. She was happy on account of the departure of her lover from the *bagne* at Brest, the particulars of which liberation she was as yet unacquainted with; and she was vexed at the stern resolves of her mother, relative to their engagement and future union. She knew that Mrs. Clayton was determined to persist in her refusals to recognise Alfred as the lover of her daughter; and she was afraid that not only her entreaties, but also those of her uncle, would be unavailing and ineffectual. Mrs. Clayton fancied she was doing her duty towards a child, whose tender years required parental care; she was not ignorant of the malignity of the world, and of the scandal that would be created, if she allowed her acquaintances and friends an opportunity of saying, “That lady suffered her daughter to marry a man who had been at the galleys for forgery!” A sentence to this effect, muttered in the ear of a stranger, so far from being followed with a question soliciting information, such as “But there must have been extenuating circumstances: perhaps the young gentleman was innocent after all, while appearances were against him: can you not let me know the particulars of the case?”—would only meet with a shrug of the shoulders, and a reply to the effect of “What a shameful breach of moral rectitude!” or “I wonder how any mother could be so inhuman, and so indifferent to the interests of her child!” Such is the present degraded state of society; and the more its members practise a conduct like the above, the more they are said to be civilized and refined!

But as society is so organised, and as its laws are so severe, those

who are desirous of preserving the good opinion of the world must not fly in the face of received opinions or notions, nor violate that which is conventionally supposed to be decency or delicacy ; but must endeavour to reconcile their conduct with even bad statutes, and commit occasional acts of flagrant injustice, to be thought upright and conscientious. Mrs. Clayton was aware of these lamentable facts—these heart-rending truisms ; and many a bitter pang did it cost her to harden her naturally affectionate and tender heart to the tears of Eloise, the remonstrances of her brother-in-law, and the anticipated entreaties of De Rosann ; for she was certain the ardent young lover would not abandon his suit till he saw that every chance was more than desperate, and till he was convinced that Eloise could never become his wife. Still Mrs. Clayton was firmly wedded to her former opinion of Alfred's innocence ; and she felt her bosom lacerated as if by the stabs of a thousand daggers, when mature reflection pointed out the necessity of receiving him with coolness, and of separating from his company as speedily as possible.

From the moment that she lay down on a mattress in the miserable barn, whither De Rosann and her brother-in-law had borne her, till the hand of her watch pointed to the hour of eight, she never closed her eyes. The presence of De Rosann was an untoward event her worst fears had not anticipated. It threatened to encompass her with difficulties and drive her to harsh measures, which a naturally generous nature shuddered to adopt. De Rosann was now poor—nay, more—he was a beggar, without a farthing in the world ; and so obstinate a resistance (thought Mrs. Clayton) to his marriage with her daughter, might be badly appreciated, and traced to pecuniary motives. She had also hoped that the ignominious fate and absence of Alfred might damp the attachment Eloise experienced in his favour ; and as Mrs. Clayton herself had encountered no opposition nor barrier to her union with Henry, she was not aware of the obstinate tenacity and permanence of true love, when its path is traced amongst thorns.

For a variety of reasons, therefore, the sudden appearance of De Rosann overwhelmed her with grief. She dared not consult Mr. Clayton relative to the best plans to be adopted in so distressing an emergency ; because, instead of endeavouring to extricate her from her perplexities, he would insist on the necessity of forgetting De Rosann's disgrace, of openly recognising his innocence, and of receiving him as her future son-in-law. Were she to adopt this line of conduct, the whole family would be obliged to return to England, to avoid the remarks of their acquaintances and friends in Paris, whence, as it was, Mrs. Clayton had deemed it necessary to withdraw, and hasten to the sea side for a time.

In this dilemma Mrs. Clayton determined to act according to the suggestions of her own judgment, and to persist in her resolutions not to allow the match, however harsh those resolutions might appear, and however pathetic might be the entreaties of her daughter, her brother-in-law, and the young man himself, to the contrary.

Mr. Clayton, in the meantime, had listened only to the dictates of a good and kind disposition, and was pre-determined to act in favour of De Rosann. He saw that the future happiness of Eloise depended upon the manner in which her engagement with Alfred was considered, and he loved his fair niece too tenderly and too sincerely, to think of crushing her hopes and her felicity for ever. He knew that change of air and variety of scenery could not eradicate the cankering worm of despair from her young heart ; he appreciated the excellence of her character and the rectitude of her natural sentiments—not the false ideas which are imbibed by an acquaintance with the world in general—too well, to suppose that she would easily forget one to whom she had pledged an unchangeable affection in his presence. He therefore resolved to seek an opportunity of conversing with De Rosann, and of unfolding to him the real state of Mrs. Clayton's mind on the all-important subject : for that lady's repugnance to his suit, after the verdict was made known, had not been revealed to De Rosann in his dungeon at Bicêtre, both Eloise and her uncle thinking it prudent to suppress that which would only have added to his misery. But it was not the worthy Mr. Clayton's intention to afflict his unfortunate young friend, without giving him some hope and some consolation. He resolved to put him in possession of certain severe truths, and to assure him at the same time that, great as the difficulties were, they must not be deemed insurmountable. "*Faint heart never won fair ladye,*" thought the excellent uncle ; "and, as my niece will eventually inherit all my wealth, what does it matter to me if I settle the half on her at once, sooner than suffer pecuniary affairs to interfere with her happiness ?"

With regard to Eloise herself, we have before said that her feelings were at present a compound of mingled joy and sorrow—hope and despair. She could not help acknowledging to herself that, in a worldly point of view, her mother was acting as most parents would do upon similar occasions ; but she wished the matter to be considered in a moral light, with due regard to the laws of justice and humanity. She had plighted her troth to De Rosann—she had fixed her affections upon him—her chaste imagination was ever filled with his image—her pure mind dwelt perpetually on every word he had uttered in her ears, expressive of his attachment ; and now, to resign the object of her solicitude—the subject of her constant thoughts—impossible ! Without him, to whom she had bound herself by words as well as feelings, life's prospective dream was a dreary waste—a sandy desert, without a single oasis—a dark heaven, unvaried by the lustre of a solitary star. To forget—to become indifferent to Alfred, was as probable as the junction of the poles or the annihilation of matter. Eloise felt that she would sooner disobey even her fond mother, than retract the syllables of unchangeable fidelity which she had breathed to De Rosann in his prison, and in the presence of her uncle. Because the world would henceforth look with coolness and contempt on an individual, whose misfortunes, and not his crimes, had mixed him up with malefactors, and obliged him to become the inmate of a vile gaol ; because





Alfred's explanation to Miss Roberts

friends and relatives forsook him in his adversity ; and because he was a penniless stranger on the face of the earth, Eloise felt that it was not only now the time to take him by the hand, but that it was her bounden duty so to do.

Such were the various reflections of the mother, the daughter, and the uncle, during the hours that intervened between the commencement of the fire and the moment at which Mrs. Clayton consulted her watch, as stated above. The unfortunate wife of Louis Dorval was in a very precarious situation, and medical advice was recommended by Mr. Clayton, who at the same time took the opportunity of questioning Dorval, apart, relative to his loss, which the farmer did not estimate at more than fifteen thousand francs,* because the house was old, and required constant repairs.

“Very well, my good fellow,” said Mr. Clayton, taking out his pocket-book, and writing and talking at the same time. “You may perhaps indirectly attribute the origin of the fire to the two travellers who arrived last night, since it was while you were engaged in transporting mattresses for them from the loft to the first floor, that a spark of your candle must have caught the straw.”

“Indeed I am very far from making so unjust an accusation against two innocent people,” cried the farmer ; “particularly—”

“Fifteen thousand francs, you said, eh ?” interrupted Mr. Clayton : “that is the estimate of your loss ?”

“At a rough calculation,” returned the farmer.

“Well, then,” continued Mr. Clayton, putting a scrap of paper into Dorval’s hands, “accept that order upon a mercantile house at St. Malo, and consider yourself indemnified. One of the two gentlemen who arrived last night is an intimate friend—a relation—a connexion of mine ; and, as he may not have immediate resources tangible at any banker’s in the neighbouring town, I merely anticipate his intentions by offering you wherewith to build another dwelling.”

The farmer received the order in stupified astonishment, and endeavoured to stammer out a few syllables, expressive of his gratitude ; but the generous donor of so munificent a gift appeared ashamed of his very liberality ; and having desired Dorval not to mention the circumstance to a soul until his various guests had departed, Mr. Clayton turned aside to address his niece, who at that moment issued from the barn.

“You are pale, Eloise ; but I need scarcely inquire the reason. It has been a terrible and a joyful night for you. The horrors of the fire and the appearance of De Rosann were enough to drive sleep from your eyes.”

“Alas ! my dear uncle—let me hope that this poor heart of mine may never resemble those desolate ruins !”

“What an idea, Eloise !” exclaimed Mr. Clayton, looking towards the dreary pile, and then glancing at the pallid features of his niece. “Is all hope banished from thy young bosom, at a

* Six hundred pounds sterling.

period of life when the dreams of the future are usually replete with bright images?"

"I know not what to think, uncle," was the reply, delivered in so melancholy a tone, that it penetrated to the soul of the excellent man who heard it. "My mother's conduct appears cruel; but it is not for me to question the rectitude of her actions. All I can say is, that the laws of society are severe where they should be lenient, and ridiculously merciful in cases which demand austerity."

"My dear Eloise, your mother's conduct *is* cruel; and I have told her so a hundred times since the day of Alfred's condemnation. I am better able to judge in these matters than she; and yet my advice is disregarded. 'Tis true, I have not so great a right to control your conduct as a parent has; but hitherto I have endeavoured to replace towards you the father you have lost; and your mother has often returned thanks to God that I was spared, to be a protector to herself and her child. With regard to all trivial matters, she has never failed to solicit my counsel, and has always followed it—because my opinion did not differ from her own; but, now that an important affair is to be considered, my authority counts as nothing. By Jove! it is rather too bad!"

"Nay, my dear uncle, do not be impatient," cried Eloise, affectionately taking Mr. Clayton's hand, and pressing it to her lips. "If you were to quarrel with my mother and to leave us—"

"Leave you, dear girl—never!" exclaimed the excellent man, a tear trickling down his cheek. "You are to inherit all my fortune—for you I will never marry—you are as a daughter to me in my declining years—and rest assured, Eloise, that you shall yet be happy with him you love."

"Oh! do you really think so? or is this said to console me?" enquired the beautiful girl, still squeezing her uncle's hand.

"On my honour I mean what I say. There are some difficulties to be surmounted—but those obstacles are not insuperable—particularly when a daughter's tears, and a brother's intreaties are to be used against a mother's stubborn resolutions. Have patience, Eloise; and we will triumph yet, my girl. At present let us ascertain the manner in which De Rosann liberated himself, or was set free, and the ideas he has formed relative to the future."

"He is here to answer for himself," cried Alfred, who had at that moment issued from the stable. Eloise uttered a cry of joy; and the two lovers were soon locked in a fervent embrace.

"Come—come, children," cried Mr. Clayton: "recollect that we are in a court-yard whither the glances of the curious may penetrate. Be reasonable, and do not expose yourself to ridiculous observations."

"Love is our apology," said Alfred with a smile, as he imprinted another kiss on the brow of Eloise, and then grasped the out-stretched hand of friendship which was tendered him by her uncle.

"We were talking of you as your voice met my ears," continued Mr. Clayton; "and you may naturally suppose that we are anxious to hear the particulars of your *exit* from the—the—the—"

“From the galleys of Brest,” exclaimed De Rosann boldly, seeing that Mr. Clayton scarcely dared mention the hated word. “An honest man,” added the youth, striking his breast forcibly with his hand, “need not blush to name the vile dens into which misfortune has impelled him: and it is possible to preserve the spotless integrity of an honourable name even when associated with the refuse of mankind.”

Had not Eloise and her uncle been already convinced of De Rosann’s innocence, the sincerity with which he uttered these words would have proved it. There was something in his manner, in his emphasis, and in his countenance, that seemed to say he was speaking the language of truth, and that the syllables which flowed from his lips, were as free from the guise of hypocrisy as the lisping of an infant is devoid of guile.

“You are a noble fellow, by Jove!” cried Mr. Clayton; “and you merit a better fate. As far as my friendship is of any value to you, De Rosann, you have it now—henceforth—and for ever!”

“And my love also,” whispered Eloise.

“A thousand—thousand thanks!” cried De Rosann: “may I be constantly a worthy object of such sweet regard!”

A pause of some minutes ensued, during which they gazed on each other in silence: a tear trickled down the cheek of Eloise. De Rosann saw it, and hastened to change the current of her thoughts by varying the conversation; he accordingly related all that had happened to him and Belle-Rose since the day on which the chain of convicts left the walls of Bicêtre. He only suppressed the narrative of François, and the circumstance of his having found the papers in the haunted room of the house that was now a heap of ruins, as being irrelevant to his own adventures, and calculated to occupy too much time by the recital.

“You are still in danger of being re-captured,” remarked Mr. Clayton, at the termination of De Rosann’s tale.

“Certainly: but as Leblond did not deceive me relative to the passports, I am still in hopes of being reserved for some signal service into whose mysteries no one can as yet penetrate.”

“It is your intention, then, to proceed to Paris as soon as your passport is signed at St. Malo?” asked Mr. Clayton.

De Rosann hesitated—cast a look at Eloise—and then gave a melancholy glance towards the uncle.

“Ah! ah! I understand,” cried the latter: “all depends upon certain circumstances, relative to which, by the bye, I must have a little conversation with you, my young friend. Eloise, do you leave us for a few minutes, and enquire of the farmer whether there be anything for breakfast. Rest assured we shall not discuss politics in your absence, but that affairs more intimately connected with yourself are about to occupy our minds.”

And Mr. Clayton smiled, as he drew De Rosann away from the spot where they had been standing, while Eloise followed them with her eyes for some moments ere she departed to execute her uncle’s commission relative to the morning’s repast. The farmer was engaged in removing his furniture from the open air to a shed at a

little distance : but the moment he saw the young lady approach, he quitted his work, and ran to meet her, the unbounded munificence of Mr. Clayton having entirely dispelled his sorrow, and made him even bless the accident which had been so productive ; for the worthy Louis Dorval had already calculated upon increasing his stock of sheep and cattle with at least one third of the fifteen thousand francs so liberally restored, and upon building a commodious dwelling with the remainder. His salutation was therefore obsequious, and his politeness remarkable in the extreme, when Eloise addressed him relative to the breakfast.

“ I thought about it half an hour ago, *mademoiselle*,” returned the peasant, cap in hand, “ and had prepared a fire in the dairy, which is a small building on the other side of the farm—you cannot see it from the spot where I have the honour to speak to you—when a strange looking man, accompanied by one of the gentlemen who arrived late last night, rushed into the room, seized the pots and saucepans, cut up the cold meat, and fell to peeling the potatoes, telling me at the same time that he was the first cook in Europe, and that he had once kept the Cadran Gris or Cadran Jaune, I dont exactly recollect which, at Paris. It was in vain that I offered to dress the breakfast : he assured me I was as ignorant as an owl relative to all culinary matters, and insisted upon preparing the meal himself. The gentleman who was with him, desired me to humour the stranger’s whims, and to fetch him a night-cap. I accordingly obeyed ; and there he is at this moment surrounded with pots, kettles, and food, and cooking enough provisions to serve a whole regiment of Swiss guards, in as many different ways as there are letters in the alphabet.”

No sooner had Louis Dorval uttered these words than Champignon made his appearance, with a cotton night-cap upon his head, an apron round his waist, a copper saucepan in one hand and a soup ladle in the other. The moment he caught sight of Eloise, he made a most polite bow, and muttered some compliment between his teeth. He then turned to the farmer and desired him to procure a multitude of articles which he stated to be absolutely necessary for his dishes ; *viz.* onions, thyme, parsley, sorrel, tarragon, &c. &c. Dorval hastened to obey the gastronomer’s directions ; Champignon himself returned to his kitchen ; and Eloise hastened to seek her mother in the barn, while De Rosann and Mr. Clayton stood conversing at a short distance.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BREAKFAST.

“ My dear friend,” said Mr. Clayton to De Rosann, when they had retired from the spot where Eloise still lingered a few minutes, to follow them with her eyes—for the affectionate girl was never tired of gazing upon her lover : “ My dear friend, you must nerve

yourself to hear more sad news, of which it is my duty to make you aware."

"Speak!—O speak!" cried De Rosann, a convulsive shudder passing through his frame.

"Not to keep you in suspense any longer," returned Mr. Clayton, "my sister-in-law is averse to—"

"My love for her daughter Eloise," added De Rosann. "I fancied as much this morning—last night—whatever might be the hour—when I aided you to carry her in the chair to yonder barn. O I guessed her secret thoughts from the chilling manner in which she received me. But I did not suffer her unkindness to vex me; for she dare not oppose the wishes of her daughter in a matter of such vital importance to that daughter's felicity."

"Alas! you do not know Mrs. Clayton, De Rosann: she fancies she is acting right, because she acts conscientiously; and when a mother has those ideas, it is difficult to eradicate them from her mind."

"But your influence, Mr. Clayton—your advice—Eloise's tears—a beloved child's, an only child's prayers, Mr. Clayton—joined to my supplication on bended knees—in that humiliating posture, my dear sir—"

"Calm yourself, Alfred; you speak at random: let us converse quietly and rationally—as men, and not as stage-actors. Pardon this rebuke; I am familiar with you, De Rosann, because I love you as a relative—as a son; and you may rely upon my aid in all your embarrassments. Why! would you believe it, that when we debated as to which sea-port town we should go to, in order to pass the summer, I suggested St. Malo, to be as near as possible to you; and thus, on our journey thither, has the fortunate breaking of our carriage enabled us to meet."

"So deep a debt of gratitude shall I never be able to repay; but, as long as you are my friend, I do not despair of possessing Eloise," exclaimed De Rosann.

"You must not think of moving her mother," said Mr. Clayton, "by tears and prayers. My sister-in-law thinks she acts from motives purely conscientious, and bearing reference to nothing save her daughter's welfare; whereas I fancy that a little sentiment of pride has a certain influence on her actions. She has an idea that her father was some great personage—you know she is of French extraction?"

"Yes; Eloise has occasionally spoken of her grandfather," returned De Rosann.

"But Eloise has never related to you any particulars relative to his extraordinary disappearance, *et cetera*?" enquired Mr. Clayton.

"Never," answered Alfred. "You know we were seldom alone for five minutes together, during the whole period when I was accustomed to visit at your house; and Eloise rarely alluded to her deceased relatives in the presence of her mother."

"Well, the history is somewhat long, and I will tell it to you on another occasion," said Mr. Clayton; "but I was remarking,

that perhaps a little pride may have something to do with my sister-in-law's present repugnance to the union of yourself and her daughter. She has imbibed the idea that her father was a French nobleman of rank and fortune, and has persuaded herself that she must honour his name and his family—although she be unacquainted with both—to the utmost of her ability. All women have some weakness of the kind, De Rosann; and we must look with a charitable eye on the failings of our fellow-creatures. Let us therefore devise some plan by which we can surmount the obstacles which diametrically oppose your wishes."

"You forget, my dear Sir, that I am an outlawed being—an individual whom the first Gendarme may arrest as a criminal—a felon escaped from the galleys. No profession—no trade can receive me: my sole hope is in the secret service to which I am more or less attached; and if I could obtain a deeper insight into the mysterious sources of power and intrigue which have ere now assisted me, I might be enabled to procure a full pardon; for the hand that commanded the stamp and the endorsement of the authorities at the *Prefecture de Police*, can doubtless obtain the royal signature to an act of mercy or justice."

"Your observations are those of a wise man, Alfred," said Mr. Clayton; "and if you would follow my advice—"

"The counsel of so distinguished a friend is a command to me," interrupted De Rosann, looking up to his companion with a species of filial attachment and respect

"Nay, my dear boy," returned Mr. Clayton, flattered by this remark; "I do not mean to usurp a power which I have no right to assume. But if you relish my advice, follow it; and on the present occasion, I should think that you would do well:—nay, more, I should even strongly recommend you to hasten to Paris, and seek an interview with Leblond. He is, perhaps, merely an agent; but he evidently knows more than you relative to the service he is embarked in; and by the help of a bribe—for I dare say he is like the generality of the world, poor or avaricious—you may obtain some valuable information at his hands. And this idea puts me in mind of another, De Rosann—a delicate subject, it is true."

"Speak," said Alfred; "you need not be under any restraint with me, particularly since I possess your friendship."

"I am glad you have uttered these words," cried Mr. Clayton joyfully; "they have relieved me of half the awkwardness of my task. But to the point. De Rosann, I know the present state of your circumstances—do not interrupt me; and am delighted that capricious fortune has put it in my power to aid you—that is, to do the same towards you as you would have done towards me had I stood in your position, and you in mine. This pocket-book," he continued, taking one from the breast of his coat, "contains bills upon a merchant's house, at St. Malo, for twenty thousand francs; they are payable to the bearer, and therefore do not require my endorsement. You will give me your note of hand on another occasion."



4. *hemping*

De Rosann received the pocket-book with thanks. The gentlemanly and kind manner in which it was tendered did not admit of another objection on the part of even the most fatidious.

"It is, therefore, well understood," said Mr. Clayton, continuing the conversation for the express purpose of appearing to dismiss from his memory the pecuniary transaction which had just taken place, "that you do not speak to my sister-in-law at present, relative to your engagement with Eloise—that you immediately proceed to Paris, and endeavour to make a friend, or rather a tool of Leblond—that you write to me as often as you choose, feeling certain of receiving exact replies; and that the ladies and myself will remain at St. Malo for the present, until I see how matters turn out, and what afflictions or blessings Fortune may have in store for us."

"I shall correspond with you as often as I know the slightest incident worth relating," answered De Rosann: then, after a moment's hesitation, he added, "and if I were occasionally to enclose a line to Eloise, my dear Mr. Clayton?"

"It would be punctually delivered," was the prompt reply.

"To prove that your noble confidence does not stand even the remotest chance of being abused, I shall invariably leave the notes intended for Eloise unsealed."

"In which case I shall as invariably send them back to you," returned Mr. Clayton. "Now, attend to me, Alfred. I am not a mere go-between—a cat's paw in this affair; but I act from principle, and with the firmest conviction of your honourable intentions. I love my niece too much to sacrifice her happiness for want of a little complaisance on my part; and I should not be ashamed if all the world were made aware of my conduct. So seal your letters, De Rosann: a man who could act basely towards the purest of God's creatures would be a wretch only fit to be trampled under foot."

De Rosann was about to reply in suitable terms to this last proof of Mr. Clayton's excellent heart and noble disposition, when a loud cry of "Stop him! stop him!" met his ears; and in a moment Azor rushed past, with a large bone in his mouth. De Rosann suspected somewhat of the real truth; and he was not exceedingly astonished to see Champignon, the white night-cap on his head, and the soup-ladle in his hand, pursuing the fugitive animal at a pace that did not give much promise of overtaking him. Champignon's face was smeared with flour, save the tips of his nose and chin, which exhibited a fearful rubicundity, the effects of stooping near a large fire. The perspiration ran down his cheeks, forming furrows in the white powder that yielded to the large drops which fell from his forehead, where a thick paste began to appear. Still he relaxed not in the ardour of his chase, but persisted in running after the dog like a madman. Presently, a high pailing arrested his course; Azor had managed to creep between the bars, and was already in the midst of the adjoining field, when Champignon was seated on the top of the fence, hesitating whether he should descend with a leap, as the ground was much lower on the other side.

While he was in this ridiculous posture, at one moment examining the green sod beneath, at another casting a searching glance in the direction which the dog had taken, and brandishing his soup-ladle as if it were some martial weapon, the *garde champetre** came up, and catching him by the leg, inquired what he was doing?

"Nothing," answered Champignon: "except looking after a marrow-bone," he added slowly.

"The boundary between two people's property is a singular place to look after a marrow-bone," returned the *garde-champetre*.

"It is as I tell you," said the gastronome; but no sooner had he uttered these words than he lost his balance; fell backwards into the enclosure which was attached to the property of Louis Dorval, and knocked off the *garde-champetre's* cocked hat with his foot as he rolled over. At the same moment, Azor, who had discussed the bone, and was returning home to his kennel, cantered slowly towards the railing. Perceiving the cocked hat rolling on the ground, before its owner could stoop to pick it up, the playful animal seized it in his mouth, and scampered once more across the fields, wagging his tail, and performing a thousand gambols to exemplify his delight, while the discomfited authority was obliged to run after the mischievous dog, venting his wrath in curses against Champignon, the hat, the pailings, and Azor. In the meantime, the gastronome raised himself from his fallen position, muttered something about "a series of accidents always happening to the best cook in Europe," and regained the dairy, or kitchen, to complete the breakfast.

A sudden idea had struck De Rosann, that it would be indecent and impolitic in him to suffer Belle-Rose and Champignon to sit down at the morning's repast with Eloise and her mother. He communicated his thoughts to Mr. Clayton, and proposed to breakfast alone with those two individuals, to prevent any unpleasant feeling or remark on the part of Mrs. Clayton. This plan was greatly approved of, and therefore adopted, the brother-in-law taking upon himself the difficult task of reconciling Eloise to the absence of her lover.

No sooner was this arrangement completed than Champignon made his appearance with a number of dishes, which he placed upon a table, in the open air, opposite the barn. De Rosann and Mr. Clayton then separated, agreeing to see each other once more before they left the premises for St. Malo. The former bent his steps towards the dairy, where Belle-Rose anxiously awaited him; and the latter sought his sister-in-law and niece to conduct them to the repast, so exquisitely cooked, and gallantly spread by the comical figure in the white night-cap.

"It appears you are acquainted with the gentleman and two ladies who arrived in the carriage," said Belle-Rose, when De Rosann entered the place which Champignon had converted into a kitchen.

* A species of police-officer, or *gendarme*, entrusted with the maintenance of order in the country.

"Yes, slightly," replied Alfred. "But that will not make me alter my plans, nor separate from you till we arrive in Paris."

"*Tant mieux*," said Belle-Rose: "I am not yet wearied of your company, although I have sense enough to know, De Rosann, that my society cannot always suit you; and that if you ever rise in the world, our friendship is at an end."

"You wrong me, Belle-Rose, I declare upon my honour," returned De Rosann. "It is true that your pursuits and mine are somewhat at variance with each other; but I shall not easily forget the obligations I am under to you. Had it not been for your aid and advice, I should perhaps have starved, or been recaptured immediately after my flight from Brest: indeed, I do know that I should have had the courage to attempt an escape."

"Say as little about that as possible, De Rosann; and let us commence an attack on some of the messes which Champignon has dished up. But perhaps you breakfast with your friends?"

"We have eaten together hitherto, Belle-Rose; wherefore should we then take our meals apart now?" returned Alfred.

"Cursed marrow-bone!" cried Champignon, who entered at the moment; "it would have made so delicate an addition to the repast!"

"We are doing honour to your viands, my worthy Apicius," exclaimed Belle-Rose, helping himself to a plentiful supply of hashed turkey.

"I reserved the dish for you, master Mercury," retorted the gastronome, who had somewhere read or heard that the winged messenger of Jupiter was the patron of thieves and vagabonds.

"You will, of course, partake of the dainties which you yourself have arranged?" said De Rosann; but before the last syllable had fairly left his lips, Champignon was already seated at the table, and playing a vigorous game with his fork.

After breakfast, De Rosann left his companions for a moment, to pay his respects to Mrs. Clayton. The reception he experienced was cold and chilling in the extreme: he, however, affected not to perceive it, but with the natural ease of a polished Frenchman informed himself of her health, made a few indifferent remarks relative to the weather, *et cetera*, and then arose to say adieu. The lovers exchanged tender and expressive glances. Mrs. Clayton condescended so far as "to wish Monsieur De Rosann well;" and her brother-in-law said boldly, "Do not forget to write from Paris, my dear Alfred, and tell me how the world uses you; for God knows that Destiny has lately reserved some sad vicissitudes to try your patience."

"Be assured of my punctuality as a correspondent," replied the youth, pressing with fervour the hand which was held out to him.

"And rely upon my friendship for ever," exclaimed Mr. Clayton, placing a peculiar emphasis upon his words.

"My stay at St. Malo will be so short," observed De Rosann, "that I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you again."

"What! do you intend to leave immediately after you set foot

into the town?" cried the worthy uncle, as if the plans adopted by De Rosann were not already known to him.

"I shall take my place in the *diligence*, or the *mulle-poste*,* this very evening," was the answer. "But I will not trespass any longer upon your time, *Madame*," he added, turning to Mrs. Clayton, and bowing profoundly, without venturing to offer his hand. "I wish you a pleasant journey, ladies. Adieu, my dear Sir."

And De Rosann retired, having cast a single glance at Eloise to assure the trembling girl of his constant love. The purport of that glance was not misunderstood: lovers have a language ten thousand times more expressive than mere syllables which flow from the lips, and which are cooled by the breath ere they vibrate on the ear; but the language of the eyes is replete with fire!

When De Rosann rejoined Belle-Rose, Champignon was not for the moment in the dairy. A consultation accordingly arose on the expediency of taking the worthy gastronomer with them, or the necessity of leaving him behind.

"I have obtained a small supply of money from my friend," said De Rosann, without mentioning any name: "and can easily give the poor fellow the wherewith to sustain himself for a certain time. Besides, he has a cousin or an uncle at St. Malo; and his culinary talents will always provide him with the means of subsistence. If you concur in my opinion, I will speak to him myself, and we shall continue to travel alone together, as before."

"Be it so," returned Belle-Rose, "and use dispatch; for we must soon think of resuming our march."

De Rosann accordingly sought Champignon in the vicinity of the dairy; and at length found him holding forth to Louis Dorval—whom he retained by the button-hole—on the excellencies of *co-telettes à la quadrille*. The poor farmer understood but one-half of the rhodomontade uttered by Champignon, and was unable to conceal his delight when the appearance of De Rosann put an end to the lecture; for the gastronomer, oblivious in the heat of argument that his hands were covered with flour, had imprinted various white marks on the coat and waistcoat of his unwilling pupil, who did not dare exhibit the slightest impatience or ill-humour, being totally ignorant as to what degree of intimacy the self-dubbed cook might claim with an individual that had given proofs of an unbounded munificence towards himself.

De Rosann drew Champignon aside; explained to him, in a few words, that he and Belle-Rose had certain reasons for being desirous of travelling alone; and placed a bill for five hundred francs in his hand. The *ex-restaurateur* opened his eyes with the most stupid astonishment at this instance of generosity on the part of one whom he had only known for a short time, and endeavoured to mutter a sentence expressive of his gratitude; but, failing in the attempt, he pulled off his night-cap, made a respect-

* The mail.

ful bow, and stood staring like an owl on his benefactor; till at length De Rosann was obliged to turn away, to avoid bursting out into a violent fit of laughter. Champignon followed our hero to the dairy, and wished both him and Belle-Rose a prosperous journey, with tears in his eyes, adding, "that the next time they met, he hoped to have the pleasure of cooking them a dish of his newly-invented cutlets."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MYSTERIOUS PAPERS.

ARRIVED at St. Malo, De Rosann and Belle-Rose bent their steps towards an inn of second-rate repute—it not being more usual in France than it is in England for foot-passengers to seek the principal hotels. The landlord was a civil and obliging man, and willingly charged himself with the task of obtaining the necessary signatures to his guests' passports at the town-hall. De Rosann then despatched a *commissionnaire* or porter to procure cash for his bills on the merchant's house which Mr. Clayton had indicated; while Belle-Rose indulged in the refreshing luxury of a bath, where he amused himself with a bowl of rich soup called *consommée*.*

The reader may readily suppose that Alfred was dying with curiosity once more to examine the mysterious papers of which he had lately become possessed in so miraculous a manner; and the longer he was deprived of a proper opportunity, the greater became his impatience to investigate their contents—a proceeding to which he had entirely reconciled his conscience, by means of the following arguments.

"If," said he to himself, "I preserve these documents untouched till I have an opportunity of advertising them in the public journals, or of making inquiries in the metropolis and principal towns of France, relative to the existence of an heir to the name and estates of the late Marquis of Denneville, I may keep them for years in my possession, and then eventually have done no good. If I read them, they may probably furnish me with some clue to discover whether there be a living scion of the ancient family, or whether the race of Denneville be entirely extinct. It is therefore my duty to take cognizance of papers which the hand of Providence has apparently thrown in my way; and I will act according to their contents."

These just and proper reflections, decided our hero to peruse the documents in question; and when the porter returned, with notes of the bank of France for a thousand francs each, in lieu of the effects that had been placed in his hands, De Rosann desired to be shown to a bed-room, under pretence of taking an hour's repose; and having carefully locked the door, he seated himself at a table, on

* A common custom in France.

which he spread the mysterious papers. We have before stated that they were letters, and that many had escaped the attacks of vermin and the ravages of time. De Rosann sought for the one that bore the oldest date, so as to read them in a proper order; and applied himself attentively to its examination. But scarcely had his eyes run over the first ten words, when he uttered an exclamation of astonishment, and struck his forehead forcibly with his hand, as if in doubt whether he were awake or dreaming. He then appeared to ruminate for a few minutes ere he continued the perusal of a document which had thus created his wonder. At length he started from his reverie, drew the letters near him once more, and hastened to accomplish his task.

As his eyes ran over each successive line, his attention became more deeply rivetted to the papers, and his interest more essentially excited. At one moment a partial gloom would pervade his features; at another a joyous ray illuminated his countenance. He seemed the victim of mingled hope and fear, joy and sorrow, anticipation and dread. Letter after letter was consecutively scanned and laid aside—not a word had escaped his scrutiny; and only one epistle remained unread. His anxiety now appeared worked up to an extraordinary pitch; for some moments he almost hesitated whether to conclude his task, or relinquish it for ever, so violently was his bosom a prey to the wildest excesses of expectation and alarm. At length he recalled his departed energy—nerved himself to bear the result, whatever it might be—and cast his eyes in an instant of desperate courage on the only letter that was still to be perused. Suddenly his visage brightened—a triumphant smile played upon his countenance—his glances were replete with delight—he involuntarily clapped his hands together—started from his chair, and cried out “Thank God—thank God! the hand of heaven is indeed evident in this miraculous event!”

For many minutes he forgot his real situation—he did not recollect where he was—he seemed involved in an ecstasy even greater than that into which Jeannette’s song had thrown him three days before. His mind was occupied by new ideas—fresh hopes were awakened in his breast—and he pictured to himself a smiling future as he paced the room with uneven steps. His delirium of joy resembled the effects of an extraordinary dose of opium on a somnambulist. He rubbed his hands together, laughed incoherently, and cast wild glances around him. His spirits appeared to be wound up to such a degree as to threaten most dismal consequences in case of a too sudden reaction. Fortunately, however, his eye caught sight of the papers scattered upon the table, and he recovered his natural equanimity in a moment.

Having carefully folded the precious documents, and placed them about his person as before, he unlocked the door of the bed-chamber, and rang the bell. The landlord himself appeared to answer the summons.

“Have you succeeded in obtaining the fulfilment of the necessary formalities to our passports?” enquired De Rosann.

“Most unquestionably,” returned the landlord.

"But I have changed my mind," cried Alfred. "Circumstances will oblige me to go to England as speedily as possible."

"Actually!" exclaimed the landlord.

"Therefore have the goodness to inform me whether there be a steam-boat from hence to Dover; and if so, when it starts."

"Apparently, there is no steam-vessel between this port and Dover; and, consequently, you must proceed to Havre-de-grace, where, invariably, there are ships of all descriptions, bound usually for a place generally called Southampton."

"Have you such a thing as a post-chaise?" asked De Rosann.

"Indubitably," was the reply.

"Which means Yes, I suppose," cried Alfred pettishly; for he was wearied of the extraordinary profusion of adverbs adopted by the landlord, and the *muladroit* manner in which they were placed amongst the other words that formed the sentences he uttered.

"Unquestionably," answered the host, with the most imperturbable gravity.

"In that case I will trouble you to order the horses."

"Immediately?" asked the landlord.

"In about an hour," returned Alfred, now, for the first time, recollecting that he had not yet communicated his intention to Belle-Rose, whom he could scarcely leave in so abrupt a manner.

"Voluntarily! But your companion, *Monsieur*, has prudently ordered a luxuriantly sumptuous dinner to be served up incontinently; and if I might adventurously offer a piece of advice, I should energetically counsel *Monsieur* not to expose himself inconsiderately to the cold air without having preparatively fortified his stomach."

"You are right, my worthy host," replied De Rosann, after a moment's consideration; "I will depart after dinner."

"Excellently arranged, admirably thought of, and judiciously contrived!" ejaculated the landlord, as he left the apartment with a low bow.

"There is a man who would fain pass himself off for a pedant," thought De Rosann in his own mind, when he was once more alone; "and all he succeeds in doing is to make himself appear a consummate ass. But let me now seek Belle-Rose, and communicate my intentions of proceeding to England, instead of accompanying him to Paris. Leblond—the police—the secret service—and everything must give way to the important mission with which chance or destiny has charged me."

Belle-Rose was reclining on a sofa, in a handsome parlour of the inn, perusing one of Pigault Le Brun's novels, or rather dosing over it, when our hero entered.

"My dear Belle-Rose," said Alfred, somewhat embarrassed, for he was afraid his precipitate conduct might appear strange, or be badly interpreted, particularly as it was impossible to reveal the real causes of so sudden a change in his plans; "my dear Belle-Rose, I shall not be able to accompany you to Paris; I have made up my mind to go to England."

"And wherefore?" asked Pierre, raising himself on one arm from the sofa.

"I am afraid of being recaptured; and I have such a horror of the galleys," returned De Rosann, inwardly ashamed of so paltry an evasion.

"Well, if you be determined, I shall not oppose your wishes," said Belle-Rose. "But when do you intend to embark?"

"I am going to Havre this very afternoon—"

"I will accompany you thither, if you have no objection," interrupted Belle-Rose, after a moment's thought; "and when I have seen you safely on board the packet, I shall step into the diligence, and return to my favourite city, Paris."

"So far from entertaining the slightest repugnance, I shall be delighted with your society *as far as Havre*," said Alfred, laying a particular stress upon the four last words.

Belle-Rose did not appear to notice that peculiar emphasis, nor did he endeavour to dissuade our hero from his purposes, but endeavoured to change the conversation. As it wanted at least two hours till dinner-time, they took advantage of the interval, and walked out into the town to purchase a few necessaries for their journey. Belle-Rose himself volunteered to buy a couple of trunks or portmanteaus, and entered a shop for that purpose, while De Rosann remained in the street, reading a large bill which was posted against a wall, and which gave him information relative to the hours of arrival and departure of the steam-packets which traversed the ocean between Havre and Southampton.

On their return to the hotel, the landlord informed our hero and his companion, "That the cook had exquisitely attended to their orders, that the market had bountifully supplied the larder, and that they might confidently rely upon instantaneously being served with an unexceptionably toothsome repast."

"The trunk-maker adjoining will presently send two small portmanteaus to the inn," said Belle-Rose, addressing the host; "will you have the goodness to convey one to each of our chambers?"

"Infallibly," answered the landlord, opening the parlour-door for his waiter, who appeared at the moment with the dinner.

A Frenchman is naturally of a gay and lively disposition. Instead of the sober, phlegmatic, and even temperament of the Englishman, he has either an unbridled flow of spirits, or a deep depression. But the former generally prevails; and when he is *en train de faire mille folies*,* there is not a happier being in the world. His eyes sparkle with a peculiar vivacity; his conversation, though light and superficial, is replete with natural wit, and he feels himself independent of all the world.

Such was now the case with De Rosann. He felt certain of being able to elude the vigilance of the Gendarmes, armed as he was with a passport, in which the most scrupulous could not

* Literally, "In the humour to commit a thousand follies." The expression is synonymous with "up to anything," or "ready for all kinds of fun."

detect a single flaw. He was about to visit another land, of whose glories, whose power, and whose resources he had heard so much, and it was a pleasant task that impelled him thither. He had seen Eloise—he had renewed with her, in the presence of Mr. Clayton, all their former vows. He was possessed of that gentleman's friendship; and he had good reason to hope that eventual success would crown all his fondest wishes. Belle-Rose carelessly questioned him as to the cause of his sudden gaiety, and was apparently satisfied with a trivial excuse, which to the meanest capacity would have seemed a prevarication; but he affected not to notice the blush that betrayed his friend's momentary embarrassment, and continued to sip his Volnay with a *connoisseur's* relish.

When dinner was over, De Rosann retired to his chamber, to arrange the various articles which he had purchased in the morning. A small portmanteau of black leather stood upon a chair, ready to receive the objects its owner might think it fit to be entrusted with, amongst which were the mysterious documents that had apparently worked so happy a change in his spirits.

Our hero's occupation was scarcely concluded, when Belle-Rose, accompanied by the porter of the hotel, entered the room; and having inquired of De Rosann if his portmanteau were ready, on receiving an answer in the affirmative, he desired the man to carry it down stairs, and lash it to the post-chaise. His orders were immediately obeyed, the bill was liberally settled, and the two travellers stepped into the carriage, which rolled away from the hotel as speedily as four horses could draw it, while the landlord declared, "That perceptibly those gentlemen were indisputably the most worthy guests he had accidentally seen during the last six months; and that he cordially hoped they would safely arrive at the end of their journey as satisfactorily as they had apparently undertaken it."

Nothing of any consequence ensued on the road from St. Malo to Havre-de-grace. Belle-Rose himself saw the baggage carefully unpacked and conveyed to their respective apartments, and settled with the postilion of the last stage.

To be brief, the hour of departure arrived. Belle-Rose had taken his place in the *malle-poste* for the evening of the day on which De Rosann was to bid a short farewell to France; and he accompanied our hero as far as the quay, where the steam-vessel was lying. De Rosann had already insisted upon Belle-Rose accepting a quarter of the sum with which Mr. Clayton had supplied him; and having repeatedly thanked the companion of his flight for the services he had derived from his knowledge of the country and friendly guidance, Alfred stepped into the packet-boat, and was soon out of sight of the spires of Havre, the French coast, and the land which contained all that was dear to him upon earth.

For some time De Rosann walked up and down the deck without taking the slightest notice of a soul. The sea was tolerably calm—a gentle breeze blew favourably from the south-eastern quarter, and the gallant vessel ploughed the blue element "like a thing of life," dashing away the white foam from her prow as if she

triumphed over the watery waste, and could control the billows, as she defied the influence of the tide. At length, De Rosann became wearied of his own reflections, and looked around him to seek a variety. On his right hand was a middle-aged Englishman of genteel appearance, good-humoured countenance, and easy manners. He, moreover, spoke French uncommonly well, and addressed De Rosann in that language.

"You are upon your way to England, Monsieur, for the same purpose, I presume, that originally led me to France—unless, indeed, you have been thither before."

"This is the first time," answered De Rosann; "but business, as well as pleasure, have induced me to undertake this voyage."

"Of course, you will proceed to London," said the Englishman.

"My affairs lie in that city; and even if they did not, curiosity alone would be a sufficient inducement to make me visit the metropolis of your country," returned our hero.

"You flatter my national pride," cried the Englishman; "and I dare assert, that if you have formed any idea of the splendour, the magnificence, and the extent of London, you will not be disappointed."

"Have you a Palais Royal in London?" inquired De Rosann.

"We have not a Palais Royal, it is true," answered the Englishman; "but our streets are large, and our shops are elegant—our bazaars are a combination of all that is costly and rare—our squares are numerous—our public edifices remarkable—our theatres extensive and handsome—our parks are open to the public, and our palaces well calculated for regal dwellings."

"I have heard," said De Rosann, "that it is only at the west-end where the streets are large and commodious, and that their width is carried to a ridiculous excess. I have, moreover, read a description of your public buildings, and they do not appear so numerous or remarkable as those in Paris."

"Wait till you see London," said the Englishman, somewhat sulkily.

"Oh!" cried De Rosann, smiling at the unworthy petulance of the other, "I only speak at present from what I have heard or read. London and Paris are doubtless the first cities in the world—and London is the larger of the two; but Paris abounds in more delights, in greater pleasures. We have *cafés*, *restaurants*, public baths, and news-rooms at every step. We have four times the number of theatres that London can boast of; and with regard to the luxuries of life, I think you will agree with me in yielding the palm to the French kitchen."

"Yes," cried the Englishman, endeavouring to conceal his ill-humour in an affected facetiousness, "the French are superior to the English in their cooking and their dancing."

"And in their manners," added our hero, drily.

The Englishman muttered a "You be damned!" between his teeth, which did not, however, reach the ear of De Rosann, and passed over to the other side of the vessel, consoling himself with the idea of "Well, thank God, we beat them at Waterloo!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

How beautiful is the ocean when its wide bosom is agitated by a gentle breeze, as the breast of a maiden heaves to the tale of her lover—when the sea-gull flaps its wing upon the crested billows as it skims them—when a few distant sails vary the dark blue of the horizon—and when the sky above is like a canopy of costly silk, whose fringes touch the expanse of waters on every side! How beautiful is the ocean when the rays of a summer sun illumine its surface—when the vessel dances gladly over the waves, dashing the white foam from its sharp prow—and when the heart of the passenger is so devoid of care as to enable him to enjoy the loveliness of the scene! O it is indeed a scene of magnificence—grandeur—and sublime terror!—a scene which creates such strange emotions of “pleasing pain” that we gladly fly to it again.

After an easy passage, the steam-vessel touched at Southampton; and De Rosann, preceded by a porter carrying his baggage, went direct to a hotel. He had some difficulty to make himself understood; but the proprietors and domestics of the various inns in the town were so accustomed to receive or attend upon French travellers, that they had generally imbibed a smattering of the language, or anticipated the wants of their transmarine guests, which answered the same purpose, even if it were not preferable on the score of saving many useless demands and explanatory signs.

Being shown to a bed-room, De Rosann prepared to change his linen and perform his ablutions ere he thought of any thing else. But no one can conceive his rage and despair, when on opening the portmanteau he found that it was not his own. He stamped his feet, and clenched his fists, as if he were about to lay violent hands on himself; large drops of perspiration ran off his forehead down his cheeks,—his countenance turned pale and red alternately twenty times in a minute,—and his pulse beat quickly to a feverish degree. Such is a Frenchman's anger; or rather, such are his mingled wrath and sorrow—an extreme, like his felicity. De Rosann cursed his unlucky stars—dragged forth article after article from the fatal portmanteau, and only found more convincing proofs of the mistake, or intentional change, whichever it might be. While he was endeavouring to compose his disordered passions, to debate within himself on the best measures to be pursued in so terrible a dilemma, a morsel of paper, that had fallen from the box amongst other things, met his eyes. He hastily seized it; 'twas a letter directed to himself: he tore it open, and read as follows:—

“*Fin contre fin*,* my dear De Rosaun. Did you deem it possible to deceive Pierre Belle-Rose, whose Janus head and Argus glances may be matched in penetration against those of Vidocq himself? Was it probable that your secret could have escaped me? Oh! De Rosaun, I always declared you were a fine gentleman, but a bad rogue.

“The noise you made in opening the cupboards of the haunted room at Louis Dorval’s old house awoke me. But I did not move; I feigned sleep, and watched all your motions. The instant I saw the papers in your hands, I recollected François’ tale; and I relied upon your honour, as a friend, to entrust me with the secret; seeing that when men travel together, every thing is in common between them,—an apophthegm I once whispered to a gentleman whom I eased of his watch in a crowd last summer on the Place de la Bastille.

“But you did not utter one word; and I kept my counsel till the proper opportunity arrived. You read the documents at the hotel in St. Malo; and your subsequent gaiety, added to the sudden change in your determination relative to our journey to Paris, *et cetera*, betrayed the result of the perusal, and the favourable contents of the papers.

“Had you acted honourably, Alfred De Rosaun, I should never have thought of outwitting you; but, if we ever meet again, recollect that scarcely your own thoughts are concealed from an experienced personage like Pierre Belle-Rose. Towards a companion I myself invariably observe a straight-forward conduct; and I expect it in others, or else the hypocrite and the deceiver shall be themselves deceived.

“I merely scribble this to save you an useless journey to London, where—if you persist in going thither on a fool’s errand—we may haply meet. Adieu.”

This letter, which was without signature or date, fell from De Rosaun’s hands as his eye glanced over the last syllable; and he threw himself upon a chair, overcome by the fermentation of inward passions, and the working of terrible emotions. He could not have fancied Belle-Rose capable of so much duplicity; but, on reflection, he knew that, according to the loose ideas of self-appropriation professed by all adventurers living on their wits, his own conduct in concealing the papers must have appeared strange. He could now account for the coldness, and ready acquiescence, with which Belle-Rose heard his plan of leaving France and undertaking a journey to London. He remembered that Belle-Rose had himself insisted upon purchasing the two portmanteaus; and made no doubt but that he had procured a couple exactly resembling each other. He called to mind his late companion’s attention to the packing and unpacking of the baggage, and a thousand little circumstances hitherto unaccountable. But he could not help feeling an internal satisfaction when he said to

* Cunning against cunning,—diamond cut diamond.

himself, "Belle-Rose thinks he possesses documents that will immediately deliver a considerable sum of money into his hands: and he is mistaken. The biter is still bit. He may discover where it is, but he cannot touch one *centime* of the treasure."

And De Rosann rubbed his hands with delight as this idea flitted across his mind. But his joy was as evanescent as the noise occasioned by the whizzing arrow shot past us; for he again recollected, that perhaps those documents, through his carelessness, might be now for ever lost to the rightful heir, whom their contents would so essentially serve. Stung by this reflection, and aware of the urgent necessity there existed of communicating as speedily as possible with certain parties in London before Belle-Rose could have time to deceive them, he ordered a post-chaise, flung himself into it, and soon had reason to acknowledge that the rate of travelling in England was considerably superior to that of his own country.

Arrived in London, his first care was to inquire for the firm of Messieurs Robson and Co.; he fortunately recollected the name, but the address had escaped his memory. The banking-house was however well known; and he hastened to Threadneedle-street as fast as a hackney-coach and a drunken driver could conduct him. The vehicle stopped opposite an extensive building, and De Rosann made his way, after considerable difficulty, to the private office of the head partner. To his astonishment he found himself in the presence of the very Englishman whom he had offended on board the steam-vessel.

Mr. Robson—for he it was *in propria personâ*—received our hero with a cordial smile and an excess of politeness. He was probably ashamed of himself for his ungentlemanly petulance on a late occasion. Be that as it may, Mr. Robson was quite another person when enacting the part of the rich banker, than he was when travelling *incognito* on business.

"Ah! *Monsieur*," he exclaimed, as De Rosann made a low bow, and stood for a moment uncertain how to commence his business; "you have lost no more time on the road than myself; and to tell you the truth, I am not at all sorry your affairs have brought you to this house; my conscience assures me that I owe you an apology for a little abruptness which I unworthily manifested—"

"Not at all," replied De Rosann, with the easiness of manner which was natural to him, and which most essentially increased Mr. Robson's good humour: "I was sadly afraid of encountering in this office a gentleman unable to converse with me in my own tongue; and I assure you that I am most agreeably disappointed, by meeting one who speaks French so fluently."

This compliment entirely won Mr. Robson's heart in favour of our hero; and he offered De Rosann a pinch of snuff, with a gesture that bespoke a certain familiarity or intimacy which did not really yet exist between them. Alfred touched the box, and bowed politely.

"Mr. Robson," said he, "I know that your time is precious, and that I must not intrude too long upon your leisure. Will you

permit me," continued De Rosann, with a species of confidence which the open manners of the Englishman encouraged, or rather created, "to ask you a few questions concerning an affair of the utmost importance?"

"Certainly, *Monsieur*,—I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with your name," cried the banker.

"De Rosann," replied our hero.

"De Rosann—De Rosann," muttered Mr. Robson: "that name is familiar to me. Ah! I recollect! Is it impertinent to inquire if you be any relation to the De Rosann of the Rue Caumartin, in the Chaussée d'Antin at Paris. I corresponded with the old man for some years; but shortly after his son succeeded to him in the business, my foreign transactions became so extensive that I was obliged to transfer the agency to a regular banker in the French metropolis."

"I am that same De Rosann who succeeded to your ancient correspondent," said our hero, convinced by the other's manner that he was a stranger to the failure of the firm of De Rosann and La Motte, as well as to the collateral circumstances attending it.

"Ah! then we are old acquaintances, in a certain way," cried Mr. Robson, with a complacent smile. "I am glad to see the son of an individual whose regularity in business was unparalleled," continued the talkative banker; "and should you have no better engagement for to-morrow, I shall be delighted if you will honour me with your company to dinner at six o'clock precisely."

De Rosann accepted the invitation, and the banker proceeded to say, "that as they had now indulged themselves in five minutes' conversation on indifferent affairs, he was ready to devote the same period to business."

"It must be upwards of thirty-three or thirty-four years ago," began De Rosann, resolved to enter briefly upon the subject, "that the Marquis de Denneville was in correspondence with your house."

De Rosann had no sooner uttered these words than Mr. Robson gave a sudden start, drew his chair closer to our hero, and prepared to listen with the greatest attention.

"And this same Marquis de Denneville," continued Alfred, "transferred, through his agent in Paris, a considerable sum of money to your charge."

"Perfectly correct," cried Mr. Robson; "I recollect that I had just been received into partnership by my father when the remittance was made to our hands."

"And the amount was eight hundred thousand francs—or—"

"Nearly thirty-two thousand pounds sterling," added the banker, without a moment's hesitation.

"Which have never been claimed," said De Rosann.

"That is to say, never directly claimed," cried Mr. Robson.

"Nor ever inquired after," rejoined our hero.

"Pardon me, *Monsieur*. By a singular coincidence, an individual has this morning been to the bank, and left word with one of my clerks, that he should call upon me in the course of the day

to speak about the very affair that has apparently brought you hither."

"Thank God!" cried De Rosann, "there is no harm as yet done!"

"How—no harm?" exclaimed the banker.

"I will explain myself in two words," replied Alfred. "The individual who called upon you this morning has treacherously possessed himself of certain documents which point out the real heir to the Marquis de Denneville's fortune: and he has doubtless come over to England with the idea of claiming the money in your hands."

"And it was from you that the papers were stolen?"

"It was so," returned De Rosann.

"I comprehend," said Mr. Robson; and, after a moment's reflection, he added, "but of course I cannot surrender the money to any one save the real heir, who must substantiate his right beyond all doubt."

"That is every thing I require," answered De Rosann; "and with regard to the papers—"

"If you can prove that they were surreptitiously obtained, I think I might undertake to restore them to the proper owner, or to yourself," said Mr. Robson, "supposing the individual in question entrusts them to me, and when you produce your power of attorney, or authority to act for the parties to whom they belong."

"And should Bell—that is, the individual who retains those documents, hand them over to you in confidence?"

"We must take a lawyer's opinion, and go before a magistrate," returned Mr. Robson.

"I am afraid," objected De Rosann, "that the laws of England cannot take cognizance of a robbery committed in France."

"In this case, I am inclined to think, *our tribunals are competent*, as you say in your own country," cried Mr. Robson with a smile; "but, at all events, I am one of the principal actors in the whole play—because I retain possession of the cash; and be assured I shall stand your friend."

"By the bye, what name did the person in question leave with your clerk?" asked De Rosann, as he was about to quit the office.

"*Monsieur le Comte d'Elsigny*," returned the banker after a momentary reference to his book of addresses.

"Thank you," said De Rosann; and he wished the banker a good morning; but before he had gained the door, Mr. Robson caught him by the sleeve, and reminded him of his engagement for the next day.

When De Rosann returned to the hotel, which was the principal house of resort for all foreigners visiting the English metropolis, he found a letter, upon the table in his room, and instantly recognized the hand-writing of Belle-Rose. The contents ran as follows:—

"By accident we have both taken up our abode at the same inn: you arrived a couple of hours after me, and I saw you step

out of the post-chaise that brought you hither. I have, therefore, resolved on choosing another lodging.

“Of course you intend to commence a desperate warfare with me relative to the papers. If it be your intention to divulge all you know of my character, I shall naturally do the same good office towards you: but if it suit you to forget the circumstances under which we first met, and to fight, upon fair ground, with any weapons save those of scandal, I am willing to make the compact; for it will not forward either of our purposes to let the world know we are two fugitive galley-slaves.

“Should this mutual concession obtain your approbation, I shall soon discover your assent by your actions. Therefore rest assured that the secret is safe with me until your lips have divulged it to my disgrace; and then the shame will be equally shared. It suits me to take another name: the suppression of your knowledge of that change enters into our compact as well as any other circumstance unconnected with the papers: but of course I do not suppose you will allow the limits of our agreement to comprehend the stratagem by which I obtained possession of the said documents. You see I am willing to act justly; and, that I anticipate your slightest objection to the conditions of our treaty. *Encore fin contre fin.*”

The contents of this letter did not at all displease our hero, as the reader may well imagine: and he was not afraid that Belle-Rose, or the Count d'Elsigny, would break an agreement that involved his own honour as deeply as that of his adversary. But while he made this reflection, he could not help smiling at the easy and off-hand manner in which his late companion, or guide, penned the epistles that conveyed his thoughts, exactly as he would have expressed them in conversation.

In the course of the day, De Rosann wrote a letter to Mr. Clayton, at St. Malo, stating, that certain circumstances, which he could not explain until they met, had obliged him to hasten to London instead of returning to Paris, according to his former determination. He concluded with a long paragraph to his beloved Eloise, wherein he assured her of the permanence of his affection, and of the sanguine hopes he entertained of being one day able to demand her hand in marriage of her mother. He besought her not to despair, but to keep up her spirits to the utmost of her power, and refrain, as much as possible, from tormenting Mrs. Clayton with supplications that at present were vain, as he was almost certain of speedily removing every obstacle to their union.

CHAPTER XIX.

MR. CLAYTON AND THE COOK

WHEN once a subject of dispute arises in a family, and is not immediately settled by a firm decision, scarcely a day passes without witnessing a reference to the unpleasant topic. Mrs. Clayton was perpetually endeavouring to persuade her brother-in-law to forbear mentioning the name of De Rosann in the presence of his niece; and he as invariably forgot, or wilfully transgressed, her injunctions. The object of all his comparisons, when he wished to cite an instance of a noble disposition, or an honourable-minded young man, was De Rosann: he never returned from his walk, but he was sure to have seen a person who strongly reminded him of De Rosann: the best dinner he ever had eaten in France, was at the *Rocher de Cancale* with De Rosann: he seldom failed to notice, at supper-time, that he wished he had some of the Madeira he was accustomed to drink when he passed the evening at De Rosann's house; and as soon as his eye caught sight of the *Constitutionnel* and the *Journal des Debats** on the breakfast-table of a morning, he deplored the absence of De Rosann to discuss with him the proceedings of the ministers of the good King Charles the Tenth.

"I wonder you can be so obstinate, William," said Mrs. Clayton one day, when Eloise had left the room for a moment to retire to her bed-chamber, where she could sit and ponder on De Rosann without restraint, "as to persist in perpetually recalling to the memory of your niece a name which she ought to forget as soon as possible."

"And do you think, my dear sister," returned Mr. Clayton, "that the heart of Eloise is made of iron—that she can cease to remember one whom she tenderly loves, and on whose image she dotes more than ever—that she possesses superhuman powers over her passions—and that her chaste affection for a deserving young man can be eradicated as easily as the recollection of an every-day occurrence?"

"Time works extraordinary changes," said Mrs. Clayton.

"But there are feelings which no time can deaden—nothing less than the grave can overcome!" exclaimed Mr. Clayton solemnly.

"Not in so young a heart," persisted the deluded mother.

"You may perhaps discover your error when it is too late, madam," cried the irritated brother-in-law; "at all events, I shall have performed my duty towards a niece whom I love, and a friend whom I deem worthy of a connexion with us."

"Nothing on earth shall induce me to give my consent to so ineligible a match," said Mrs. Clayton, angry in her turn, "save on one condition,—and as that is an impossibility, or, at all events, a great improbability, my daughter stands but a small chance of becoming De Rosann's bride."

* The two leading French daily papers.

"Might I be acquainted with the nature of that condition?"

"'Tis scarcely worth mentioning," remarked the mother.

"Nay—I have a motive," urged Mr. Clayton.

"Let him, then, discover the particulars relative to my late father's disappearance—his real name, and rank in life—and the fate of the property he succeeded in realizing."

"Absurd!" cried the disappointed Mr. Clayton, who thought that some other condition was about to be proposed by his sister-in-law. "You know he never can discover those secrets which my father in vain sought to develop."

"Then let him renounce all hope of possessing my daughter!" returned Mrs. Clayton.

"I shall divide my fortune between her and De Rosann," said the uncle drily; "for I do not believe that if he did fulfil the harsh terms you impose, you would even then accord your consent."

"On my honour I would," exclaimed the mother, desirous of putting an end to this dispute.

"And I sincerely hope your honour may be put to the test."

Mrs. Clayton would have, perhaps, replied to this sarcasm, had not the musical voice of a songstress in the street fallen upon her ear at the moment, and rivetted her attention to the air with which a poor girl was delighting a crowd incapable of appreciating the merits of her harmony.

"'Tis a lovely air!" exclaimed Eloise, running into the room, and hastening to the window. "The *chanteuse* sings with some taste; and I am devotedly attached to those martial measures."

Eloise placed herself against the window in such a manner, that the searching glances of a curious multitude could not reach her, while the songstress essayed the following air in a voice natural sweet and agreeable.

ORLANDO'S WAR SONG.

He's the pride of the land, and the subject of story,

The hills and the valleys re-echo his fame;

O then let his vassals sing praise to his glory,

And tremble, adoring their Roldan's dread name!

The demon of slaughter

Lent nerve to his hand,

When Erivain's water

Roll'd red to the land;

While the murmurs of woe, and the screams of the dying,

Were mixed with the agonized shouts of the flying.

Like the eagle that governs the regions of heaven,

Like the lion that widely extends his domain,

Meet praise and meet honours to Roldan are given,

Renowned in the dale, and beloved on the plain.

The subject of story,

The boast of the brave;

The paladins' glory,

And mighty to save,

When the murmurs of woe, and the screams of the dying,

Are mixed with the agonized shouts of the flying.

Then march to the field—for the columns are wending,—
 The brands are undrawn, and the sheaths are away ;
 The Angel of Death to each army is sending
 His pinions of slaughter—O haste to the fray !
 The sun that is beaming,
 High over their heads,
 At eve shall be gleaming
 On their lowly beds ;
 For the murmurs of woe, and the screams of the dying,
 Shall mix with the agonized shouts of the flying.

The banner of conquest with Roldan is waving,
 His arm has well wielded the chivalrous brand ;
 The foe is beneath him for clemency craving—
 Orlando's the pride and the boast of the land.
 When warriors are sounding
 Alarms on the shield,
 When chargers are bounding,
 He's first in the field,
 Where the murmurs of woe, and the screams of the dying,
 Are mixed with the agonized shouts of the flying.

The song was concluded,—Eloise threw a few small pieces of money from the window,—the *chanteuse* looked up to express her gratitude with a glance, and passed on.

There is something peculiarly attractive in the martial or national airs of France. Their versification is good ; and in this point they are infinitely superior to the English. But there is one fault—if fault it can be called—that is common to all : we mean their extreme length, which renders them tedious when sung in society. The most scrupulous critic, whose doubts as to the legitimacy of rhymes are numerous and severe, cannot quarrel with those of the French national songs, nor can his lynx eye detect the slightest error in their euphony and measures. This much cannot be said in favour of English airs of the same kind. Many of them are a compound of the most wretched nonsense, tacked together, without the slightest regard to “rhyme or reason,” to agree with the notes of certain tunes. Let us merely quote, as an instance of the misery of their rhymes, “over us” and “glorious,” in *God save the King*. The memory of the reader can doubtless supply a thousand others.

But as these chapters are not written with a view to create elaborate comparisons between the respective merits of the manners, the institutions, or the literature of the two first nations in Europe, we shall relinquish our brief criticism, and continue the thread of our narrative.

Mr. Clayton was more annoyed than ever at the dispute which had just taken place between himself and his sister-in-law ; and as soon as the *chanteuse* had concluded her song, he seized his hat, and ran out of the room to hide his vexation elsewhere. Now, the excellent uncle of our fair heroine was somewhat of a *gourmand* in his way : he loved the French dishes and the French cookery as dearly as could an Apicius or a Heliogabalus, without affecting

the exquisite refinement of the former, or the delicate taste of the latter, whose usual food was peacock's brains and sparrow's tongues. As Mr. Clayton was walking down the street, directing his steps towards the quay, he was struck by the cleanly appearance of a new shop for the sale of comestibles, or *friandises*, which had only been opened that morning. A few loiterers were standing opposite the entrance, gazing on the *poulets truffés*, the *patés de foie gras*, the *chevreuil*, and a variety of other dainties, spread in gorgeous array along the clean boards that slanted and projected on each side of the door. Mr. Clayton stopped for a moment, to regale himself with the odour of savoury meats that issued from the kitchen; and seeing some game apparently suited to his taste, he entered the shop to purchase it. An individual, whose head was enveloped in a white night-cap, stepped forward, uttered an exclamation of delight, and seized the hand of his customer, who would as soon have found himself in the midst of Araby's hottest desert, as exposed to so friendly a welcome from one whom he speedily discovered to be the officious cook he had seen on the premises of Louis Dorval.

"Do you not recollect me?" shouted Champignon. "'Twas I that served up your breakfast a few days ago—"

"Yes—yes, my good friend—I think I call to mind—"

"O you need not think," cried the gastronome, at length induced to relinquish Mr. Clayton's hand; "for by enumerating the various dishes you partook of, I can speedily satisfy you as to the truth of my assertion."

"There's a man that does not choose to be misunderstood!" remarked one of the loiterers outside.

"I dare say *Monsieur Citron*" (for that was the name Champignon had adopted), "has recognised his friend or acquaintance *Cornichon*," said another: and a hearty laugh followed this execrable piece of wit.

Mr. Clayton's indignation, or rather confusion, knew no bounds. He was in an ill humour when he entered the shop; the present scene did not help to cool his temper. Ashamed, however, to give vent to his wrath in public, he inquired the price of a brace of pheasants; and Champignon hastened to describe the peculiar excellencies of a variety of dishes, having placed an exorbitant value on the birds which had originally attracted his present customer.

"Well—well!" cried Mr. Clayton, wearied of the gastronome's explanations, and anxious to escape from the rude gaze of the loiterers at the door; "have the kindness to send them to my lodgings"—and he gave the address.

"The pheasants, and the other articles I recommended?" inquired Champignon.

"Yes—any thing you choose," replied Mr. Clayton, scarcely comprehending a word that was said to him, so great was his confusion.

"O but you must cast a single glance at my kitchen!" exclaimed the provoking Champignon, laying hold of his customer's

arm, and endeavouring to pull him towards the entrance of the place he had mentioned.

"I will not give you the trouble."

"No trouble, I assure you; allow me to show you the way."

"My God, what a man!" cried Mr. Clayton, in agony; and disengaging his arm by a sudden motion, he made his escape from the shop, and took refuge in a neighbouring news-room for a couple of hours, fearful of meeting the sneering countenances of any of the individuals who had witnessed his unlucky encounter with Champignon. On his return home, he found Mrs. Clayton, his niece, and the cook, in grand consultation together, and overheard the voice of the servant, saying, "You may depend upon it, *Madame*, that *Monsieur* intends to regale a large party of friends."

"Indeed he does not, though!" exclaimed Mr. Clayton, stepping forward, and pushing open the kitchen door, in the vicinity of which he was standing.

"Then wherefore such a profusion of dishes?" asked Mrs. Clayton.

"There must be some mistake!" cried her brother-in-law, whose countenance betokened ill humour and perplexity.

"Oh! no—since the *friandeur* produced the address of the house written upon your own card."

"A short fat man, with a red nose, and a white night-cap," added the servant; "he insisted upon tasting my soup, declared there was no tarragon in it, and when I remonstrated, the wretch replied, that 'I must not contradict *the best cook in Europe*.'"

Mr. Clayton's eye now fell for the first time on the kitchen dresser; and his astonishment was not a little excited by the objects that met his view. He instantly suspected the real truth, snatched the bill out of his sister-in-law's hands, and when he saw it was receipted, uttered an emphatic oath, which we shall suppress for the sake of delicacy, and on account of our regard for the fair sex. Suffice it to say, Champignon had so amply supplied Mr. Clayton's larder with all the most costly luxuries of the season, that there could not remain a doubt as to the whole family being provided for during the next fortnight. Mrs. Clayton had paid the *petit memoire*, which amounted to the moderate sum of four hundred and seventeen francs, because the bearer produced her brother-in-law's card; and although she could not comprehend the reason of such an expensive outlay, she did not for an instant suspect the justice of the demand.

"This day's work," said Mr. Clayton, "will be a good lesson to me for the future, not to stroll into shops when I am in an ill humour."

"If we were only thus regaled," observed the amiable Eloise, "every time you are out of temper, my dear uncle, it would not be very often."

CHAPTER XX.

THE DINNER-PARTY.

PRECISELY as the clock struck six, Alfred De Rosann was ushered into the drawing-room at the magnificent abode of Mr. Robson. An elderly lady and two young ones were seated with the banker before a small fire, which had been lighted to give the apartment an air of cheerfulness, as the shutters were closed, and the lamps were already placed upon the table. Mr. Robson welcomed our hero with a frankness and cordiality which proved how religiously Belle-Rose had maintained the conditions of the compact to which De Rosann was disagreeably obliged by circumstances to assent. Alfred was then presented to Mrs. and the Misses Robson. He would gladly have sought an opportunity of questioning the banker alone for five minutes relative to that gentleman's interview and proceedings with Belle-Rose; but politeness, and the entrance of two other guests, obliged him to restrain his curiosity.

"M. Lebrun is invariably late," remarked Mr. Robson, consulting his watch, and manifesting the venial impatience of a host who is fearful that the dinner may be spoilt, or of a man of business whose appetite has been sharpened by an intense application to his affairs.

"Ah! do you expect Lebrun?" inquired a little gentleman with a vast appendage of gold seals to his watch-chain.

"The entertaining Frenchman that speaks broken English, and that I often meet at your house, Robson, do you mean?" asked the other visitor, whose nose was adorned with an immense pair of silver spectacles.

"The same," returned Mr. Robson.

"I heard a rumour upon 'Change to day, relative to yourself and Lebrun," said he of the seals, addressing himself to Mr. Robson.

"Indeed! I wish he would make his appearance! But what did you hear, Mr. Goldsmith?" inquired the banker.

"That you and the Frenchman were about to form a partnership," was the reply.

"There is some truth in it," returned Mr. Robson: then seeing that De Rosann was unable to take a part in their conversation, he said to him in French, "I do not know enough of your Bourse in Paris; but our 'Change is dreadfully scandalous. My friend on the right informs me he has already heard a report, that I am about to form a mercantile connexion with M. Lebrun,—a French gentleman whom I invited for the express purpose of meeting you—"

"I offer you a thousand thanks for such kind consideration," cried De Rosann: "but does no member of your family speak my native language?"

"How silly I am!" exclaimed the banker, striking his hand upon his thigh, as if vexed with himself for not having thought of

something before. "My younger daughter, Selina, is perfectly acquainted with French: do try her, and see if she have forgotten any of it."

But before De Rosann had time to avail himself of Mr. Robson's hint, the drawing-room door was thrown open, and a domestic announced the arrival of M. Lebrun.

As if a basilisk had stung his hand, De Rosann gave a sudden start, and overturned the chair from which he had risen to be presented to M. Lebrun. No sooner had he set his eyes on the individual who bore that name, than he recognized a person he wished to meet before almost any other in the world. The recognition was mutual—so was the sudden start—for both were electrified, as it were, by the same machine. They then bowed coolly to each other, and seated themselves.

"Have you been long in London?" enquired Lebrun timidly.

"Two days," answered our hero abruptly.

"You came direct from Paris? or have you been in any other country?" asked Lebrun, recovering a little assurance.

De Rosann gave no reply: his object was gained by the few words that had passed with his fellow-countryman. Lebrun was evidently ignorant of what had happened to him: that was all our hero required to know; and, instead of encouraging the conversation of an individual whom he did not like, he turned to say a few words to Miss Selina Robson.

Dinner was presently announced; and De Rosann offered his arm to Selina, whom he found to be unaffected and accomplished. Lebrun was accidentally seated opposite to him at the table; but he carefully avoided encountering the glances of our hero.

"You are dull to-day, Lebrun," cried Mr. Robson, when an interval between the courses gave him an opportunity of remarking his guest's unusual taciturnity.

"A slight head-ache, my dear sir—'tis nothing."

"A glass of Champagne will raise your drooping spirits," observed the banker, making a signal to the domestic to serve M. Lebrun with the delicious juice of Epernay's choicest grapes.

"M. Lebrun is doubtless fond of Champagne," remarked De Rosann with an emphasis, the bitter irony of which was alone perceived by him whom it was intended to annoy.

"It is the finest production of my native country," muttered the crest-fallen Frenchman in a low voice.

"You certainly have experienced a loss to-day on 'Change,'" cried the gentleman who sported the silver spectacles, and whose name was Jenkins.

"There was a fall in the *four per cents*," said Mr. Robson; "and I will wager heavily that my speculative friend has suffered by the reaction. Do you know, M. De Rosann," continued the banker, speaking in French, "that Lebrun is a desperate gambler in the funds?"

"I can readily believe it," answered our hero drily, while M. Lebrun's colour went and came ten times alternately in a minute.

"And yet the world says we are about to sign agreements of partnership," added Mr. Robson with a smile.

"Miss Selina, shall I have the pleasure of taking wine with you?" said Lebrun, whose embarrassment was increasing every moment, and whose confusion, at the last remark made by Mr. Robson, was palpable to all present.

"He does not wish it to be publicly known quite yet," whispered the banker to the gentleman in spectacles: and the worthy Mr. Robson actually believed the truth of his own assertion.

The conversation now became more general, as the dessert had made its appearance. De Rosann was surprised at the removal of the table-cloth immediately before this last service; and his wonder was not a little excited when he saw the ladies rise from their seats and leave the room unattended by the gentlemen. His good sense, however, almost instantly assured him that this was one of the prevailing customs in England; and he did not suffer any mark of astonishment to escape him.

"By the bye," said Mr. Robson, when he had passed the decanters of port and sherry to his neighbour, "it is true that Williams, the stock-broker, has absconded."

"Indeed!" cried he of the seals: "I heard a vague rumour of the affair this morning, but did not attach any importance to it."

"Has he decamped with much property?" enquired Mr. Jenkins, whom we might have dubbed knight of the silver barnacles.

"I fancy not," answered the banker: and remarking that De Rosann did not discourse with Lebrun, he explained in French the subject of the present conversation.

"Such instances, I hope, are rare in this land," said Alfred with a bitter smile. "In France, the stock-brokers, as well as the lawyers and the notaries, are obliged to give an ample security for the rectitude of their proceedings to the government; and no man can become a stock-broker, without being able to prove that he possesses a certain property."

"In that case public confidence is seldom violated," observed Mr. Robson.

"Alas! how deeply is it to be deplored that the vices and immorality of mankind render such precautions necessary!" cried De Rosann. "No trust ought to be deemed more sacred than the private property of individuals. By a base flight with the treasures placed in your care, you involve the peace and prosperity of thousands: you reduce the widow and the orphan to a state of mendicancy; you deprive the poor of their hard-earned savings, and the industrious of their honourably-acquired competency. So base a breach of all social and moral ties, frequently causes a thousand times more distress than the delinquent might have anticipated. In commercial speculations, there are so many connective links, so many wheels within wheels, that the ruin of one house may originate the fall of twenty. Credit is suspended—the good suffer for the evil—and the upright intentions of the just man are rendered liable to suspicion. As years succeed years, it daily becomes more difficult for an individual to obtain a loan, save on the most unex-



ceptionable security. Need we look far for the causes of so universal a distrust?"

"Your remarks are as true as the gospel," said Mr. Robson, who had listened with the greatest attention to the words of his guest: "and, as you assert, the virtuous invariably suffer for the vicious; the deeds of bad men render the actions of the conscientious doubtful: as luxury increases, so does crime."

"And it is terrible to be deceived by one in whom you have placed confidence," continued De Rosann, heedless of the banker's observations, and raising his voice to its highest key. "Friendship becomes a coin with which a man endeavours to cheat his neighbour: affection—love—gratitude—are all sacrificed, in this age of corruption, on the altar of self-interest. But the day of retribution must come; the villain and the deceiver cannot long triumph in their turpitude; nor the hypocrite in his guile;—vengeance—justice—or the hand of Providence will assuredly overtake them in their wicked career. I knew a man who entrusted all his affairs to a treacherous partner; this partner absconded with the property, and left the business of his confiding associate in a state of utter ruin. The scoundrel fled to another country—was hospitably received by a worthy and open-hearted father of a family—and then had the baseness to contemplate robbing his new benefactor. What do you think of conduct like this, gentlemen? and what would you say to the wretch who is capable of such damnable deeds? I need scarcely ask you. Well—I am the individual who placed his confidence so foolishly—that is the man," proceeded De Rosann in a voice of thunder, as he pointed to Lebrun, "who absconded with my property—and you, Mr. Robson, are the hospitable parent he would even now deceive!"

"Is it possible!" cried the banker, his hand trembling, his cheek turning pale, and his pulse beating quickly.

"'Tis as I tell you," answered Alfred in a lower tone: "the name of that villain is La Motte. Let him deny it if he can!"

"M. De Rosann—I am sure—you do not mean," began the miserable wretch, endeavouring to pacify our hero's wrath by means of a paltry excuse or apology.

"Depart—quit—leave this house directly—defile it no longer with your presence!" ejaculated Alfred, pointing towards the door. "Obey me, La Motte—or I shall not be able to master my indignation!"

The degraded Frenchman did not wait for a second bidding—he dreaded a more severe proof of De Rosann's vindictive feelings against him, if he did not execute his command—and, without daring to raise his eyes towards a single soul, he sneaked out of the room like a malefactor detected in an infamous deed.

"I should have spared you this scene, my dear sir," said Alfred, addressing himself to Mr. Robson, when the door had closed behind La Motte, "had not your intentions of forming a partnership with the villain, who has just left us, been communicated to me. I forebore to act thus summarily in the presence of your wife and daughters,—and I solicit your pardon for having taken upon

myself the task of expelling that man from your society after I had made my accusation, to which his manners, his countenance, and his subsequent cowardice pleaded guilty."

"My dear young friend," cried the banker, rising from his seat, and embracing our hero as if he had known him since the moment of his birth; "how deeply am I indebted to you for the important service you have just rendered me. Within ten days would that infamous scoundrel have been a partner in my bank; the deeds are already more than half completed at my lawyer's office. O never can I forget this providential interference in my behalf!"

"I have acted as you would have done towards me," returned De Rosann; "and I sincerely congratulate you on your narrow escape. In less than six months M. La Motte would have absconded to America with all your fortune."

"I know it—I know it!" cried the banker, wiping away tears of joy from his eyes, and hugging our hero once more in his arms.

In the mean time, the gentlemen of the seals and the spectacles sat in mute astonishment, observing all that passed, but understanding nothing, for a reason which scarcely requires explanation.

"'Tis a part extracted from a French drama!" whispered Mr. Jenkins.

"To be sure," returned the other, in the same *sotto voce*. "The young Frenchman is the heroine's lover; Mr. Robson is her father, and Lebrun is a villain who has endeavoured to set him against the match, and to seduce the daughter."

"I should not at all wonder," said he of the barnacles. "See how naturally the young fellow performs his part. The father is convinced by his eloquence—the scandalizing mischief-maker dares not reply. Ah! he decamps—and just as if he were guilty, too!"

"And now the father falls upon the young lover's neck, and embraces him. The heroine will be shortly introduced: I'll lay a wager 'tis Selina. Well! this is an agreeable surprise! But when I reflect a moment, I think I have seen a translation or imitation of the piece at the Haymarket," added Mr. Goldsmith.

"I am sure I have at the Adelphi," returned Mr. Jenkins: and as Alfred and the banker had now ceased speaking, and had resumed their seats, the two gentlemen whose imaginations were so fertile, shouted "Bravo! bravo!" with all their might. They moreover clapped their hands so violently upon the table, that the glasses, plates, and knives, danced up and down with a terrible clatter. Mrs. Robson and her daughters caught the unusual sound, as they were preparing the tea and coffee in the drawing-room, and hastened to ascertain the meaning of it. This sudden appearance of the three ladies convinced their speculative visitors more than ever that the whole was a comedy got up for the occasion: and instead of ceasing their shouts and their clapping, they continued to roar and to knock the table like a couple of mad-men.

At length, after a great deal of difficulty, order was restored, and an explanation took place. Mr. Robson detailed all that had occurred, to the entire confusion of the two guests who had told each other such wilful untruths about their having seen a certain

play at the Haymarket and Adelphi theatres. The whole party then retired to the *salon*, where the beverages concocted with the produce of Souchong and Mocha were served to the gentlemen.

It was very easy to perceive that De Rosann had suddenly become a great favourite with the whole family. Indeed, it was both natural and proper that he should be so; for he had rendered Mr. Robson a most important service—a service that had saved the confiding banker from certain ruin; consequently, a service that never could be forgotten. He ceased all in a moment to appear as a stranger among them,—he was converted, as it were by enchantment, into a benefactor, a friend, an intimate acquaintance. Selina thanked him “for his handsome conduct” in the name of her mother and sister, as they were totally ignorant of the French language; and she recounted to him, with a few innocent additions to increase its ludicrous aspect, the mistake made by Mr. Goldsmith and Mr. Jenkins. Alfred laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks; but he expressed his sorrow that the worthy geniuses were not suffered to remain in their happy state of ignorance concerning the truth of the matter.

Before the hour of departure arrived, Mr. Robson drew De Rosann aside, and commenced a topic peculiarly interesting to our hero.

“I received a visit from the Count d’Elsigny yesterday afternoon,” said he; “but I suspect that he is about as much entitled to that rank as you or I.”

“Perhaps so,” remarked Alfred, without manifesting any signs of embarrassment, having made up his mind how to act relative to Belle-Rose.

“But that is immaterial,” continued the banker: “the object of his visit is the essential point.”

“Did he entrust you with the documents?” inquired De Rosann.

“You shall hear. He called upon me, according to appointment, and stated his business; of which I, of course, in the first instance affected a profound ignorance. Having furnished me with a verbal analysis of the contents of the documents he held in his possession, he desired to know whether I considered myself empowered to hand him over the property of the late Marquis de Denneville, upon his furnishing me with a receipt, or any other security of the kind which I might require. My reply was to the effect, that I must peruse the deeds before I could give an answer. He hesitated,—and by a subtle turn endeavoured to ascertain whether any person had lately applied to me concerning the same affair. I settled his skilfully managed interrogations by an evasion, and again requested him to entrust me with the papers for four-and-twenty hours. To this he objected,—muttered something about considering the matter, and withdrew, telling me he should call in the course of three or four days, when he had consulted his legal adviser.”

“And in the mean time what is to be done?” asked Alfred, fearful that his most sanguine anticipations were destined to fall to the ground.

"Patience, my dear friend—patience!" cried the banker.

"Have you reflected that this Count d'Elsigny may leave the country, sell the papers with the chance of procuring any thing through their agency to some Jew, or destroy them in a fit of disappointment and rage?" said our hero.

"I have considered the matter much more maturely than you think," returned Mr. Robson; "and the result of my deliberations makes me perfectly easy on all those points; because it stands to reason, my young friend, that the Count will visit me again, and that he will prefer entrusting me with the papers to resigning all hope of recovering a farthing at my hands."

"That is true," said De Rosann: "and he may have postponed this visit for a few days in order to see how I shall act in the mean time; for he knows that I am in London."

"There is then a sufficient explanation of his conduct," cried the banker, with a smile of satisfaction. "Do not be alarmed,—we will bring the rogue to reason; and I again repeat, let us have a little patience for the moment. Should your funds run low, and should you not choose to draw upon Paris, you know where to come for a supply; I shall feel proud to be your banker as well as your friend."

Alfred returned his most sincere thanks for this generous offer, the full extent of which he duly appreciated; and having paid his respects to Mrs. and the Misses Robson, he withdrew to his hotel.

CHAPTER XXI.

BELLE-ROSE.

MR. ROBSON prophesied truly. In a few days Belle-Rose—for we shall still continue to call him by his proper name—paid another visit to the banker, and inquired if he had thought any further upon the important question connected with the papers.

"I can only repeat my former words," cried the man of business: "do you possess any document authorising you to receive the property of the late Marquis de Denneville, which is deposited in my hands, either as his heir or in behalf of his heirs?"

"No, I cannot say that I do," answered Belle-Rose.

"Then how can you expect me to surrender into your hands a fortune, which, if unclaimed, necessarily devolves to me, like any other deposit forgotten, or unasked for?"

"I merely sought information," cried Belle-Rose, somewhat embarrassed how to act; since he now saw very plainly that the papers in his hands would be productive of no extraordinary benefit to himself.

"Do you know the names of the real heirs, if you be not your self the rightful owner of the money?" asked Mr. Robson, desirous of obtaining an insight into the views of the *soi-disant* Count.

"Their names I am acquainted with," answered Belle-Rose, seeing that it was no use to disguise the real truth; "but their place of residence I am a stranger to."

"Those papers, of course, mention the name," persisted the banker.

"'Tis solely from that quarter my knowledge is obtained. The legal heir formerly resided in London; years have however past since that person quitted this kingdom."

"And you know not where to find that person, M. Le Comte?" said Robson.

"Candidly, I do not."

"By your own confession, then, it would appear you have no right even to those papers, much less to the fortune of the Marquis de Denneville," cried the banker, in a severe tone.

"That is my affair," returned Belle-Rose, with his usual coolness and effrontery.

"I beg your pardon, M. d'Elsigny; but you will excuse me if I be somewhat inquisitive, because I am entrusted with a considerable sum, which I dare not resign to the first individual who steps forward to claim it."

"You have more claimants than one, I suppose," said Belle-Rose, smiling ironically.

"I will be as frank with you as you have been with me," replied Mr. Robson, seeing that the *soi-disant* Count might be induced to listen to reason, although he did not fear intimidation. "There are no claimants for this property, M. d'Elsigny; but there is a young gentleman, a fellow-countryman of your's, who is in communication with me on the subject. He has discovered the abode of the existing heir to the Marquis de Denneville; he possesses the authority of that heir to guarantee all he does in the business,"—Mr. Robson did not think a little falsehood in such an emergency could be construed into a crime of very flagrant dye—"and even without your papers he can soon find satisfactory evidence enough to ease my mind, and to induce me to give up the funds entrusted to my charge since the year 1796 or 1797."

"And the name of this young gentleman—this fellow-countryman of mine—is Alfred De Rosann," exclaimed Belle-Rose, considerably crest-fallen since the above explanation.

"The very same."

"If I had not been aware that he must have already informed you of the particulars of these papers' contents, I should not have answered your questions just now."

"I am perfectly convinced of the fact, M. d'Elsigny," returned the banker, assuming a coolness and an indifference in the affair, that threw even the wily Belle-Rose off his guard.

"Then my business with you is concluded," said Belle-Rose, after a momentary pause: and he moved towards the door, expecting the banker to retain him; but that gentleman wished him a civil "Good morning," and turned to his desk, as if to resume his labours. Belle-Rose was now entirely satisfied that the papers were not so absolutely necessary to the real heir as he had

imagined; the wonderful presence of mind exhibited by Mr. Robson totally deceived the experienced adventurer, and he retraced his steps to the chair he had just left, determined "to make the best of a bad job," as the common expression has it.

"Mr. Robson," said he, "I am unwilling to do your young friend—I mean Alfred de Rosann—"

"You are right," interrupted the banker; "he is my friend."

"I do not wish to do him any harm, nor prejudice his views by retaining possession of these papers, since at all events they will facilitate the progress of the affair, and afford proofs so satisfactory that no doubt as to the claims of the real heir can exist; but De Rosann is indebted to me a sum of money; and however disadvantageously to myself he may have represented the manner in which I became possessed of the documents, he could not deny in my presence the fact that they were handed to me as security."

"Indeed!" said the banker, not choosing to contradict one word of all that the other might tell him.

"'Tis perfectly true, on my honour!" continued Belle-Rose, with the most unblushing effrontery. "Between ourselves, De Rosann has been rather wild; and as I entertained a considerable affection for the young man, I mortgaged a part of my property—my own ancestral estate in Picardy, to relieve him from his embarrassments."

"Most noble conduct!" cried Mr. Robson, with a serious countenance, as if he believed every syllable of this rhodomontade.

"And it is my intention to give him my younger sister in marriage, if he act honourably towards me," continued Belle-Rose.

"But at present I am rather pressed for ready cash; and as I do not choose to encumber my estate in Picardy any farther—"

"Very natural!" exclaimed the banker, not a muscle of his face moving, nor the slightest smile curling his lip.

"You understand me, I perceive," proceeded Belle-Rose: "I am not one of those gay young noblemen who squander away their property, as if estates and bank-notes were as plentiful as brick-bats in a kiln. Besides, my giddy days are over,—you and I, Mr. Robson, must not think of committing the follies that lead children into difficulties—we have wives—"

"Ah! M. d'Elsigny is married!" cried the banker, feigning astonishment at an assertion which he suspected to be as false as the preceding, and those that were to succeed.

"O yes—and blessed with a smiling family of eleven children," answered Belle-Rose, with a bland smile. "The Countess was a rich heiress, of a noble and ancient family, descended in a direct line from the celebrated Roldan, who was killed by Bernardo, the Spanish warrior, at the battle of Roncésvalles—"

"I did not know Roldan left any offspring."

"I fancy, between ourselves, that they were all bastards," said Belle-Rose: "but be that as it may, my wife traces her lineage back to the good old paladin; and we have still his helmet in my ancestral castle."

"And at this minute you are somewhat in want of money,

M. d'Elsigny?" cried Robson, fearful that his companion was about to amuse him with the history of the twelve peers of Charlemagne, and to connect all the heroes of yore to the divers branches of his family.

"Exactly, Mr. Robson; to that point I should have come at last; because, whether I borrow some ready cash of you, and leave these documents as security, or whether I deposit them with my notary in Paris, and obtain the necessary funds, which are not very considerable, from him, it is the same to me."

"What is the amount you so generously advanced to my young friend, De Rosann?" inquired Mr. Robson.

"Twenty thousand francs," was the modest reply.

"I would not give half that money to possess your documents," said the banker, in a decided tone of voice. "With four hundred pounds sterling I can terminate the whole affair: advertise to request the witnesses to come forward—pay the French lawyers' fees in Paris for collecting as many proofs as possible—remunerate the various agents employed in the business,—in fine, with half the sum you advanced to my young friend, I shall be able to arrange every thing to my satisfaction. I speak as a banker, and as a man of business, M. Le Comte: you must excuse me, but the security you offer is scarcely worth ten thousand francs to me, and nothing at all to any one else."

"And supposing,—merely a supposition, you know,"—said Belle-Rose, "that I offered to deposit these papers for that sum, should you be inclined to advance the money?"

"Why—I do not exactly know—there may be no objection: I have funds belonging to De Rosann in my hands; and he has given me *carte blanche* to act for him as I choose," mused the banker audibly.

"I lost a large sum last night, at play, to our ambassador, with whom I am very intimate; by the bye, I replaced him at Vienna for a short time, the year before last—"

"M. d'Elsigny is a diplomatist," said Mr. Robson.

"O yes; and a colonel in the army too," answered Belle-Rose.

"In that case I cannot refuse you the little advance you require," exclaimed the banker, suffering it to appear that the rank, titles, family, and numerous appointments of Belle-Rose, had originated this sudden resolution in his favour.

It was now that Mr. Robson made use of the *soi-disant* Count's own falsehoods as weapons against him.

"Of course, you have a good account open with your banker in Paris, Monsieur d'Elsigny."

"O certainly; this accommodation is merely temporary."

"I thought so: in that case you will be so kind as to sign an agreement, by which the documents become my own exclusive property, if you do not repay me within the space of one fortnight. This is merely as a matter of form, you know; because your fortune and rank in life can always command ten thousand francs—it would be strange if you could not—eh! eh!"

"Thank God! the *chateau* d'Elsigny exists still!" cried Belle-

Rose, "so e'en draw up your deeds as you choose; and instead of a fortnight, put ten days."

"You act like a nobleman," said Mr. Robson, with an imperturbable gravity which defied the slightest suspicion of its sincerity.

To be brief, the agreement was concocted according to the amendment of Belle-Rose—the four hundred pounds were counted down upon the table—and the documents were handed over to the banker. When Belle-Rose had placed the bank-notes in his pocket-book, and when Mr. Robson had satisfied himself by a reference to a memorandum De Rosann had given him, that the papers were correct, both in number and identity, he could no longer contain the mingled contempt and indignation which he had nursed during the last hour; but he burst forth in a strain as vehement, if not as eloquent, as that made use of by De Rosann, when he exposed the villany of La Motte.

"Miserable wretch!" cried the banker; "I know not whether you be a Count or not, nor do I care: but one thing is very certain, that you are nothing more than an arrant swindler—an adventurer—a thief. Do you for one moment imagine that I believed an atom of your extravagant tales—your Roldans—your castles—your revenues—and your estates? Do you fancy I was blinded by your specious stories—your bounty towards De Rosann—your matrimonial speculations in his favour? Begone; and no longer sully this office with your presence!"

"If De Rosann have said one word to you—" commenced Belle-Rose.

"He has not uttered a sentence to your prejudice, save the damning fact of your having stolen the papers from him at Havre," cried the infuriate banker.

"'Tis all the same; I may as well inform you what kind of a person your friend De Rosann is," exclaimed Belle-Rose, coolly: and he was about to unfold all the disagreeable events in our hero's life, when Mr. Robson sprang forward, seized the wretch by the arm, and thrust him out of the office, anathematizing him as "a calumniator and a thief."

The discomfited Pierre did not think it worth while to trouble Mr. Robson any farther, but made his *exit* from the bank, muttering curses against the English, and exclamations of joy in the same breath, when he recollected the sum of money he now possessed. "After all," said he, "London is a miserable city, compared to my dear Paris: a cat cannot live by swindling in the former; and a whole menagerie of wild beasts may prey with impunity on the worthy citizens of the latter. If it were not so devilish convenient to be a Count in England, and so inconvenient—not to say ungentlemanly—to go to the galleys in France, I would return to Paris forthwith. As it is, let us try London a little longer."

With these words he cocked his hat on one side, ran his fingers through the bunches of hair that stuck out beneath the brims, threw an extraordinary swagger into his gait, and turned into Birch's on Cornhill to take a bason of turtle soup, with a look



Scene at Bonté

of defiance at the industrious citizens whom he encountered in the shop.

He seated himself at a table opposite to a stout, demure-looking personage, whose blue coat and brass buttons, buff waistcoat, and drab small-clothes, betrayed the substantial tradesman at the first glance. Belle-Rose could not avoid a smile when his eye wandered over the staid tranquil being that was discussing some ox-tail with a certain relish, and was qualifying it through the *medium* of a glass of iced punch, while all his motions appeared rather the mechanically-forced efforts of an automaton, than the spontaneous activity of a living thing.

“Your soup, sir!” said a waiter to Belle-Rose: and although the self-dubbed count did not exactly comprehend the words of the domestic, a certain savory mess, now standing before him, recalled his attention from the singular figure opposite. But, no sooner had he applied the first spoonful to his lips, than the scalding heat of the turtle made him drop the spoon, expectorate the few drops he had taken, strike the table with his hand in a paroxysm of mingled agony and rage, and stamp his foot violently on that which he thought was the floor: it however fell with all its weight on the corus of the gentleman on the other side of the table, and caused that hitherto silent personage to give vent to so terrible a cry, that the waiters ran towards him with open mouths and staring eyes to ascertain the origin of his agony. Belle-Rose, whose pain was instantly forgotten when he heard the dismal yell, burst into a fit of laughter at the comical face of his neighbour. This only increased the wrath of him whose toes were so peculiarly sensitive; and at length, unable to contain his indignation, he, in the veritable spirit of a true Englishman, raised a fist that might have floored an ox, and levelled the diminutive Frenchman with the ground. Belle-Rose started up, his face purple, and his eyes flashing fire: but the timely interference of a policeman put an end to the warfare, and obliged the offending and the offended parties to follow him to the Mansion House, where the Lord Mayor was sitting at the moment on the magisterial bench, in order to dispatch a few cases of trivial consequence. The police-officer stated the position in which he discovered the two belligerents; and the city-monarch proceeded to investigate the case.

“What is your name?” said he, addressing the Englishman.

“Daniel Higgins, please your lordship,” was the reply, accompanied by a respectful salutation.

“Well, then, Mr. Daniel Higgins,” continued the Lord Mayor, with an emphasis that created a general titter in the court, “you will be so kind as to state simply, and in as few words as possible, the origin of the dispute.”

“Why, your lordship,” answered Mr. Higgins, scratching his head, and winking his left eye, “I am a peaceable citizen, wot deals in the grocery-line, and I lives in Mark-lane. Having some business on Cornhill this morning, I sallies forth, and bends my way towards the place of rendi-woo (*rendezvous*); but as I was summat too early, and as Mister Michael Lobkins, the tanner, whom

I expected to meet, wasn't yet arrived, I says to myself, says I, 'Let us go and take a bason of soup,' says I, 'at Birch's; eos vy, I always patronises the Cock, and this time we'll give t'other a chance. Live and let live,' says I. So with this here intention I goes to Birch's, and orders a bason of hox-tail, which is my favourite beverage, with a little drop of hiced punch to wash it down. Now, my Lord Mayor, there ain't a more quieter and tranquil person in existence than your humble servant as is speaking: I seldom opens my mouth; and when I does, my language is as concise as possible."

"So I perceive," said the magistrate drily.

"Then that's positive proof, your lordship, since your lordship acknowledges it yourself," cried Mr. Higgins with a species of triumph depicted on his countenance. "Well, as I was saying, I went into Birch's, and sate down at a table jist as gravely as your lordship at the bench there, or an owl in an ivy bush. I had not been long engaged in discussing my hox-tail and sipping my punch, when I hears a gallows row at the door, and I sees that insinivating Frenchman, with his castor a one side, and his hair sticking out like a mop, enter the inner room with a hawful swagger. 'Oh! oh!' says I to myself, says I, 'here's summat flash from Frogland:' but I says nothing aloud, your lordship, although I takes notice of every thing wot passes. So that there *Mounseer* bounces in, setting us all agog; and he orders his soup, which was turtle; and while the waiter was a-fetching it, he stares at me in the most himperant manner in the world, just as if my face was a bit more comical than your lordship's, or any other poor ignorant creature in the world. I twigs my fine gentleman's mincing looks and flagrant manners; for I have heard speak of those confounded dancing-masters on t'other side of the water; but I still preserves my gravity. Presently *Mounseer's* soup arrives, and he forgets that it is steaming-hot; so he claps a spoonful to his ugly mouth, and burns himself, as you might naturally suppose. Down drops the spoon—out he spits the soup—rap goes his hand on the table—and plump falls his foot on my corns. Now I don't know whether your lordship be blessed with corns—but I has 'em in abundance; and not being before-hand in an over good humour with our friend there, I was in a devil of a rage, particularly when he burst out into a horse-laugh, as if it were a devilish good joke. This irritated me confoundedly—and I doesn't deny having lifted up my fist and knocked the Frenchman down as clean as a whistle. That's the plain unvarnished truth, your lordship—or may I be dam—called a liar."

When this plain and concise tale was brought to a conclusion, the Lord Mayor questioned Belle-Rose; but finding that they could not understand each other, an interpreter was sent for, and through his agency, the following dialogue took place.

"What is your name?"

"Pierre Count d'Elsigny," was the reply.

"Are you a refugee, on account of political matters, or are you a resident in England for your own pleasure?"

"I travel for my own pleasure."

"Will you state the origin of the quarrel?" said the Lord Mayor in a conciliatory tone of voice, and with a politeness which he thought due to the other's rank. The request was immediately interpreted, and acceded to.

"I entered a pastry-cook's shop to take a bowl of soup, and, by mere chance, seated myself opposite to that individual," answered Belle-Rose, pointing to Mr. Higgins, who lolled out his tongue and looked towards the crowd of spectators in the court, as if he were desirous of soliciting their peculiar attention to a language which he, in his ignorance, laughed at. "My soup was so hot that I burnt my mouth, and accidentally stamped upon my neighbour's foot in an instant of pain. I do not deny that his ridiculous physiognomy brought a smile to my lips: but ere I could apologize for my awkwardness, he struck me a violent blow, which knocked me down; and the interference of the police-officer alone prevented me from returning it."

"You are entirely in the wrong, Mr. Higgins," said the Lord Mayor in a harsh tone, when he had examined the witnesses; "and if you do not satisfy this French nobleman by the most humble apology, I shall not only fine you for breaking the peace, but shall strongly recommend him to prosecute you for the assault."

"Lord bless your worship!" exclaimed the chop-fallen grocer; "I'm sure if I'd known that such was the law, I would never have lifted up a finger, much less a fist against the Frenchman: but, I am as basely ignorant of the laws as your lordship, or any other fellow-creature."

"Do not make me the subject of your odious comparisons," cried the Lord Mayor; "but terminate this affair as speedily as you can, and let me never see your face in this office again."

"I thought the liberty of a British subject, who hates the French as he ought to do," remonstrated Mr. Higgins, "was as safe as a guinea in your lordship's pocket."

"Justice, sir, is the basis of liberty. And now, once more, I command you to solicit that gentleman's pardon, or it shall go hard with you."

"Pretty justice!" muttered Mr. Higgins between his teeth; then, calling the interpreter towards him, he said, "Will you have the goodness to explain to that snivelling Frenchman, that I heartily forgive him for the stamp on my corns, and I desire him to think no more about the rap on the head that I gave him in return; and you may say, if you like, that I'll shake hands with him, and stand a bottle of wine to drink the Lord Mayor's health."

The conciliatory portion of this apology was briefly explained to the *soi-disant* count, who thanked the Lord Mayor for his kindness, in having thus terminated the business, and withdrew from the court, saying to himself, as a complacent smile animated his countenance, "Well! at all events, the English authorities pay more respect to aristocracy than the French. Decidedly I must try London a little longer." And having thus made up his mind to prolong his visit to the metropolis of England, he pulled his hat

once more over his right ear, ran his fingers through his hair, and resumed his former swagger as he turned into the Poultry,

CHAPTER XXII.

SELINA ROBSON.

NOTHING could exceed the joy of our hero, when, at the expiration of the ten days specified in the agreement between Mr. Robson and Belle-Rose, the documents were duly handed over to him by the worthy banker, who had taken such trouble to reserve them from the adventurer's grasp.

"'Twas a hard battle, my dear De Rosann: but I fought it courageously on your account. The rogue was as deep as a finished scoundrel well could be. As long as I live, I shall never forget his extravagant tales, which he told with such an air of sincerity, that a person less experienced than myself, would certainly have believed them. I met him yesterday morning in the Strand, and he had the impertinence to make me a low bow. I did not, however, care to acknowledge it; and the fellow, nothing discouraged, cried out in a familiar manner, 'Ah! Robson—my boy—how are you?' he was hanging on the arm of another gentleman; and I heard him say as I passed by them, 'That is my banker—I am good for a thousand pounds with him, thank God!'—Did you ever hear such effrontery?"

"There is not a man in Europe more capable of suppressing a blush than he," said De Rosann. "But let us forget the Count d'Eligny, and rejoice at the recovery of these precious deeds."

"You will shortly return to France, Alfred—and we shall lose the pleasure of your company. You know you are a mighty favorite at home—Mrs. Robson loves you as her own son—Mary declares you are the handsomest young man she ever saw—and Selina is equally ardent in her praises of your talents and literary acquisitions."

"Flattery—pure flattery, my dear Mr. Robson!" cried De Rosann. "But let me answer your question about my return to France. Much as I am unwilling to resign, after so short and agreeable an acquaintance, the pleasure of passing my evenings with your amiable family, circumstances—urgent circumstances, connected with these papers—will oblige me to depart almost immediately."

"And what is the meaning of *immediately*?" enquired the banker with a smile. "To-day—to-morrow—or in a week?"

"The day after to-morrow: you know I promised to stay for Colonel Wentworth's—or rather Mrs. Wentworth's ball; and as you procured me the honour of their acquaintance and of the invitation, I would neither pay so bad a compliment to yourself, nor to your friends, as to disappear on the eve of the grand *fete*."

"Bravo!" exclaimed the banker. "And now, without any ceremony, my dear boy, you must make your *exit* from my office. Look at this pile of letters—not one opened yet—the clock has

already struck twelve—and I must answer them all before sun-set. So do leave me alone for the present, and pay your respects to the ladies in the drawing room; it is not too early for a friend like yourself.”

“I will avail myself of your permission,” said De Rosann, “and communicate in person the certainty of my departure the day after to-morrow.”

Selina was alone in the drawing room when De Rosann entered. As he ascended the stairs, the sounds of her harp fell upon his ears: and they ceased the moment he touched the handle of the door.

If I have intruded upon you at so unseemly an hour, Miss Robson, your father alone must bear the blame; for he it was who sent me hither—and with a particular purpose—”

“My father was aware that you would be well received, M. De Rosann,” returned the young lady: “and may I know the particular purpose which has procured me this unexpected pleasure?” she added playfully, and blushing, slightly, fearful of appearing imprudently familiar.

“To announce my speedy departure,” answered Alfred.

“Your departure!” cried Selina, her countenance losing its vermilion tinge, and becoming deadly pale.

“Good God! you are ill—you are unwell, Miss Robson!” exclaimed De Rosann, noticing the death-like pallor that overspread her features, and running forward to lead her to a chair.

“Thank you—it is nothing—a sudden pain—it is past,” said the poor girl, casting down her eyes to conceal a confusion that was too evident, while her cheek and neck were once more suffused with a deep crimson dye. A pause of some minutes ensued—De Rosann felt uneasy; he knew not wherefore—and Selina could not suppress a sigh.

“You were practising when I intruded upon your privacy, Miss Robson,” said De Rosann, at length breaking a silence which was equally disagreeable to himself and his companion. “Pray resume your music—and perhaps I might venture to solicit you to add the melody of a sweet voice to the harmony of your instrument.”

“Excuse me this morning, M. De Rosann; I am not very well—a sick head-ache—an oppression of the spirits I cannot account for—have robbed me of all inclination to continue my amusement—”

“Even to oblige me,” added Alfred in a tone of respectful familiarity which he had adopted since the evening of La Motte’s exposure; for although that evening was the first he had ever passed in the society of Miss Selina Robson, the footing on which he stood with the parents entitled him to be considered in the light of something more than a common acquaintance.

“Nay—if you particularly desire me to return to my harp,” began Selina, a partial confusion again appearing in her manner.

“Not for worlds, Miss Robson, if you be ill—and you really do *not* look well,” exclaimed De Rosann, gazing for a moment intently yet not rudely—because his glances betokened interest, and no gross passion—on the countenance of Selina.

She was pale, and a tear glistened in her eye: De Rosann

thought she had never appeared so beautiful before. The fact was, that he had not till then thought of examining her features with attention. Her hair was brown—her eyes were hazel—her mouth small—and her facial line was cast in a Grecian mould. Her figure slender and well-formed; she had scarcely seen two and twenty summers—but her mind was even more accomplished and attractive than her person.

“And wherefore are you in such haste to leave us?” enquired Selina, after another pause, during which she endeavoured to compose herself so as once more to touch upon a subject that gave her pain.

“Urgent business, Miss Robson—”

“O it is always urgent business, or unexpected letters, that serve now-a-days for excuses,” interrupted Selina, with something bitter in the emphasis she laid upon her words, although a faint smile played upon her lips. “One no sooner becomes acquainted with people, than they run away.”

“Perhaps they occasionally do well,” said De Rosann, “to leave in time, ere the good impression they have created, be obliterated or deadened by the faults a longer intercourse with them would expose to view.”

“You either wish me to pay you a compliment, or—”

“Or what?”

“Or to tell you to stay, at the risk of developing the dark side, as well as the bright side of your character.”

“Could you think me capable of such inordinate vanity, Miss Robson?” cried Alfred, as he inadvertently laid his hand upon her own. The touch was as momentary and as evanescent as the flap of a bird’s wing, or the reply of an echo to a single sound; but it brought a blush to Selina’s countenance—a blush that scarcely failed to meet the eye of De Rosann. He did not apologize—but affected to be unaware that his hand had instantaneously encountered her’s—and he acted prudently; for a solicitation of pardon would only have attached an importance to that which Selina should have regarded as a trifle.

“No—I do not think that vanity is one of the faults you intend to conceal by so precipitate a departure,” said Selina, endeavouring to maintain a cheerful tone of voice by assuming a gaiety in her conversation.

“Then you are certain that I have faults.”

“Now I shall accuse you of vanity,” returned Miss Robson. “But is it decided that you leave London the day after to-morrow?”

“Unalterably fixed: although others take advantage of the convenient words ‘urgent circumstances,’ ‘matters of vital importance,’ *et cetera*, to serve as their apologists, I have no need of dissimulation, because your father is acquainted with the important nature of my affairs.”

“Papa is really too tiresome!” cried Miss Robson: “he never tells us any thing. I dare say he knew three or four days ago, of your intended departure.”

“No—indeed he did not—let me do him that justice. It is true

he was aware of my determination to leave London as soon as I had perfected a weighty affair ; but he was uncertain whether I should succeed until this morning. That is—we were both morally sure—though not absolutely.”

The entrance of Mrs. Robson and her elder daughter changed the conversation ; and our hero shortly after took his leave. But as he returned slowly to the hotel where he lodged, his imagination gave way to a variety of conflicting ideas. He was not vain in reality—he did not venture to flatter himself, because he had a certain pride to offer up incense to—but he suspected that his anticipated departure had awakened something more important than a momentary sorrow, or a common regret, in the mind of Selina. Her confusion—her repeated changes of colour—her refusal to resume her music—and the suddenness of her indisposition—all corroborated his supposition. It was true he had given her no reason to suppose that he was in the slightest degree captivated by her charms or her accomplishments. He had paid more attention to her than to her sister, or to any other young lady he had ever encountered at her father’s house ; because she alone could discourse with him in his own native language. But in all their conversations, he had scarcely ever paid her the usual compliments that a chivalrous spirit of gallantry invariably encourages when in the society of a young and pretty woman : he saw that her mind was too sensible and too much superior to the frivolities of life, to require the offerings of flattery ; and literary subjects had invariably furnished them with topics. De Rosann was, therefore, quite innocent of any attempt to engage the affections of a heart whose love he could not return ; and while he felt that no levity on his side had given Selina the slightest encouragement or hope, he could not help commiserating the luckless maiden from the bottom of his soul, and of breathing fervent prayers that he might be mistaken. At the same time he knew that Love is a tyrant, and not a slave—a master, and not a menial. It is the magic power whose enchantments can cast chains around the hearts of princes, potentates, and nobles—whose influence is universally felt, and seldom dared—and whose entrance into the human breast is as often effected by degrees as with precipitation. Love tames the pride of the warrior—makes the mighty monarch bow the knee—and visits the lordly palace or the humble cottage at will. Bolts—bars—walls—and ramparts, may keep at bay every thing but Love !

When De Rosann returned to the hotel, he found two letters lying on his table. The first was from Mr. Clayton. It was in answer to the one Alfred had written to him the day of his arrival in London ; and it expressed the worthy uncle’s surprise at so sudden a change in the youth’s resolution of proceeding to Paris. It was, however, full of protestations of friendship, and of hope. Mr. Clayton said that Eloise was in good health, and desired to be most kindly remembered ; and that if De Rosann did not soon return to France, he would allow her to write a few lines in his next letter. Our hero was overjoyed at these favourable tidings ; and he almost forgot the second despatch, that lay unopened upon the table, in

the wildness of his delight. At length his eye caught sight of the neglected epistle, the contents of which ran as follow :—

“ I understand you have effected your escape, and that you are in London, despite of my injunctions to persuade you to return straight to this city. Fortunately your disobedience of orders which unseen powers spoke through the *medium* of my lips, has not as yet prejudiced you in the favour of your superiors and mine. But you must not desert the cause you have embarked in; you must be watchful and vigilant, awaiting the moment when your services will be required.

“ These words may probably arouse your conjectures as to the nature of the service alluded to, and the means whereby you are to discover the arrival of the exact period at which you will be called upon to act. With regard to the former, I am myself unable to draw away the mystic veil that covers gigantic resources and designs: with regard to the latter, you must continually reside in Paris, and time itself will teach you how to act, and show what duties you are destined to perform.

“ The authorities of the *Chancellerie** were dreadfully enraged at your escape from the galleys, because your sentence had been so indulgently commuted by the merciful disposition, as they expressed themselves, of the reigning monarch. A price has been set upon your capture; every town in France has received, or will shortly receive, the description of your person; and the Gendarmes will consequently be upon the alert. But you are protected by the all-seeing powers that commanded me to provide you with your passport, and to arrange with our agent, Plombier, for your flight: and most sincerely do I hope that you will eventually justify the expectations of those who deemed you worthy to be rescued from a lingering imprisonment. For, notwithstanding the severity of the measures which the Minister of Justice instituted against you, the moment your escape was reported at the *Chancellerie*—notwithstanding the reward set upon your capture, your pardon—full unconditional pardon will be signed in a short time. The same hand that controls the signature of the Prefect of Police, can direct the pen of Charles the Tenth.

“ You have already received sufficient proofs of the capabilities of the hitherto invisible powers whom you must eventually serve—you ought to be convinced that they are generous towards their adherents—then listen to the counsel of their agent, who speaks for them. Remain in England until you receive your pardon, signed and sealed by the royal hand; the delay may be a week—but it shall not exceed a month: then hasten to Paris, and enquire for me according to the instructions I gave you and Belle-Rose in the gaol at Verneuil. I await your reply; that I may know whether to enclose your pardon to London or not, as soon as it shall be

* The abode and offices of the Minister of Justice.

obtained. Your obedience to the wishes of your benefactors is a condition of your receiving the promised indulgence.

“*Rue de la Channoinesse,*

“Your well-wisher,

“Paris, June, 1830.

“A. LEBLOND.”

This letter troubled and pleased De Rosann at the same time. The hope of procuring a full pardon was the most important object of his wishes next to the desire of possessing Eloise. He loved his native France as dearly and as enthusiastically as a William Wallace or a Tell could have adored, the one the Highlands of Scotland, the other the Canton of Uri; and his heart leapt at the idea of being shortly able to tread his parent soil a free-man once again—unshackled by ignominious bonds—unaccused of damnable frauds—fearless of being recaptured and conducted to a gaol. But, in order to obtain that unconditional pardon—in order to regain his forfeited rights as a citizen of France, and to return to its shores as the free-man he was desirous of becoming—he must succumb to a hard condition, and linger idly in a land which he did not love, and whence he was anxious to depart. He had visited England for the purpose of ascertaining if the property of the late Marquis de Denneville still remained at the disposition of an heir—and he not only felt it his duty to place the documents, which alone could recover that property, in the hands of their rightful owner, and thus secure to himself the pleasure of fulfilling a sacred trust reposed in him by something more than chance; but he was anxious so to do for other reasons that savoured of an interested and selfish nature. It was true he could effect the same purpose by means of epistolary communication: but he had so fondly calculated upon being the bearer of such important tidings as the recovery of a considerable sum of money to a person who deemed it lost for ever, that he would have shed tears to resign the joy he thus anticipated with such pure and fervent delight. And surely, after all the trouble and labour he had undergone in terminating the affair so promptly and so judiciously, the reward he promised himself cannot appear too exorbitant.

It was in vain that the perplexed mind of our hero sought to reason calmly on both sides of the question, and to arrive at some conclusion relative to the importance he ought to attach to Leblond's letter. If he waited to obtain his pardon, he would certainly have a better claim on the indulgence of Mrs. Clayton, when he should implore her to forget the past—although he had no occasion to blush for his misfortunes—and should solicit her to receive him as a son-in-law. By remaining in London he was moreover certain of securing a continuation of that unsolicited favour which had already done him essential service, and which promised a permanence of its good feelings and protection towards him. He could, without materially offending against the laws of propriety and rigid honour, retain the documents in his possession a short time longer, and keep the heir ignorant of their existence until his return to France; and he might enclose Leblond's letter to Mr. Clayton, as an apology for his prolonged absence. Were

the person who was entitled to inherit the fortune of the late Marquis de Denneville, involved in the slightest difficulties, or suffering on account of the want of those funds which he alone could furnish the means to recover, his correct mind and honourable principles would not for one instant have suffered him to withhold the papers; but he knew that the heir was in affluence, and in the midst of abundance, and had most probably ceased to be anxious on a subject which a long and hitherto impervious mystery had baffled all hopes of elucidating.

Urged by these reflections, De Rosann wrote a short letter to Leblond, in which he declared a fixed intention of paying the most implicit obedience to his directions, and thanked him for his kind promise of procuring the royal pardon. Our hero concluded by saying, that the moment Leblond chose to recal him to France, in the name of his secret protectors, he was willing to follow their directions, and should feel proud of an opportunity to demonstrate his gratitude towards those who had already assisted him in the midst of his embarrassments and disgrace.

De Rosann then replied to the friendly letter he had received from Mr. Clayton. He enclosed the epistle Leblond had sent him from Paris, and begged his excellent benefactor to believe, that if it were not with the hope of procuring his pardon, he should not remain in England another moment. He did not, however, mention one word relative to the documents he retained in his possession; but he merely said, that when they met he would explain *vis à vis* the motives that had originally induced him to change the place of his destination from Paris to London so soon after their conversation and agreement at the farm-house. He concluded his letter with a hope that Mrs. Clayton might one day be induced to award him the hand of her daughter, particularly as he should soon be able to return to France openly and fearlessly, and not, as he left it, trembling at the sight of a police-officer, and dreading to be arrested every moment.

Would the reader think of asking, even if we were sufficiently careless to forget so important a fact, whether De Rosann availed himself of Mr. Clayton's permission to write to Eloise on this occasion as well as on the last, which we faithfully recorded in a former chapter? Alfred did *not* forget to address a letter to the amiable being whom he adored; and it was considerably longer than the one directed to her uncle. But before he terminated his epistle, he did not fail to inform Eloise of Mr. Clayton's promise, that, if he remained in London, she should be allowed to write a few lines to console him in return; and he claimed at her hands the fulfilment of a pledge made for her by her uncle.

When these letters were despatched to the post-office, the mind of our hero felt eased of a considerable cause of anxiety; and he retired to rest that night with feelings of felicity such as he had not experienced for some time.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BALL.

IT is most singular, how the most important events of our lives spring from circumstances which the association with those episodes in our daily destinies alone renders worthy of notice. The licentiousness of an abandoned woman (according to the popular fable), caused a disastrous war of ten years' duration, and the eventual sack of a mighty city: the distaste of a Roman senator's daughter for the rods of the lictors, originated the election of plebeian instead of patrician consuls. On the mighty sea of life, the smallest rock will occasion shipwreck—the slightest current cause a deviation from a certain course—the most insignificant quicksand swallow up immense wealth—the appearance of a sudden mirage wrecks the sanguine mariner upon the nearest peninsula. And such are the destinies of man! As he walks upon level ground, a pebble may cause him to stumble: as he deviates from his habitual path, a quagmire may await his unconscious steps!

De Rosann was engaged to dine with Mr. Robson, and accompany his family to Mrs. Wentworth's ball in the evening. On account of a trifling difference between the clocks at the West End and the one by which the household economy of the worthy banker's spouse was regulated, our hero arrived a few minutes before six, and happened to find Selina again alone in the drawing-room. He would willingly have avoided the disagreeableness of a *tête-à-tête* now that his mind entertained the idea of Selina's attachment to him; but it was impossible to combat against the decrees of fate, or the embarrassments of chance; and he endeavoured to assume those easy manners, and the half-familiar, half-respectful style of conversation, which he hoped would convince her that he considered her in the light of a friend, and simply as the daughter of one to whom he was under obligations, and in whose family he had accidentally become intimate. But he could not help noticing the pale countenance of Selina, and the confusion with which she received him; for her delicate mind instantly suspected that Alfred might imagine those interviews were purposely so arranged as to take place in the absence of witnesses. It was therefore in vain and fruitlessly she essayed to be cheerful; her smiles were melancholy, her laughter was forced, and her gaiety was assumed. All this did not escape the observation of our hero.

"Had I not been engaged to dine with you this evening," said Alfred, "I should nevertheless have done myself the pleasure of calling."

"For a particular purpose again?" asked Selina, playfully alluding to a portion of the conversation that took place between them the day before.

“Precisely: I have procrastinated my departure.”

“For four-and-twenty hours?” inquired Selina, with a sigh.

“Do you wish it was for no more?” cried De Rosann, carelessly: then recollecting that his words might probably awaken disagreeable ideas, he hastened to add, “But, of course, that is a matter of indifference to you. I shall not leave London at least till the expiration of a fortnight, and perhaps not before the 17th or 18th of July: the latter period is the more probable.”

“Now, indeed, we shall have time to discover your faults,” cried Selina, while the joy that the news afforded her flashed in her eyes, and revivified a portion of the faded roses that had nearly died upon her cheeks. “Pray, does papa know of this sudden change in your determinations—this new proof of a fickle mind? Ah! how can men reproach us poor frail creatures with vacillation and capriciousness, when they are not themselves more constant to their purposes than

the shade

By the light quivering aspen made,

as our great poet and novelist of the north has expressed it!”

“A gallant man will reproach the fair sex for nothing, save its cruelty and indifference to the sighs of its despairing admirers,” said De Rosann, with the common politeness of a Frenchman, who seldom suffers an opportunity of paying a compliment to pass unheeded. But Alfred’s reflections were wandering to other matters at the time,—he thought of his faithful Eloise, and uttered the above words in a moment of absence, regardless of their import, and forgetful of the manner in which they might be interpreted. Selina was surprised to hear such a sentence issue from the lips of De Rosann: he usually forbore to address an useless flattery to one whose accomplished mind soared above those trifles; and hitherto their conversation had invariably turned upon subjects which, being of a graver nature than the common-place topics of the day, did not admit of the idle nothings and *petites bagatelles* usually addressed by empty-headed young men to vain and conceited women. Selina therefore attached a certain importance to the reply that De Rosann had made to her defence of her own sex; and instantaneously cast a memorial glance over her conduct, to ascertain if she had ever been guilty of the slightest indifference towards our hero. Her rapid investigation was satisfactory to herself on this head; but it caused a sigh to agitate her bosom, as she inwardly thought, “Alfred has never expressed himself in such terms before: perhaps he begins to perceive that I am vain and giddy, like the generality of my sex, and therefore intends to offer me up the same incense of adulation that he and his contemporaries present to the coquettish and the proud.”

De Rosann himself forgot the words he had so imprudently uttered as soon as they had left his lips; the image of Eloise was uppermost in his mind, and for several seconds he did not appear to recollect that he was in the society of another individual. At length awaking from his transient reverie, before his absence had amounted to actual rudeness, he hastened to renew the conversation.

"I think you asked me, Miss Robson, if your father were aware of my intention to remain in London a short time longer?"

"O, I dare say he is; for if you were as important a personage as Victor Hugo or Lamartine in disguise, and if you had entrusted your secret to him, with injunctions to communicate it to his own family only, he would follow the safer plan, and never divulge it at all."

"The generality of men of business are thus cautious," observed De Rosann: "but I assure you that he is not yet informed of this change in my plans,"

"Here he is to answer for himself," cried Selina.

"My dear friend," said Alfred, taking the banker's hand, "your daughter will not believe that you are as yet ignorant of my resolution to trouble you a fortnight or a month longer with my frequently repeated visits."

"Indeed! I am heartily glad to hear that you do not leave us so precipitately: at the same time I wish your departure was procrastinated for a year rather than a month."

"Now you believe me, Miss Selina," said De Rosann, smiling.

"I never really doubted you," was the reply: and Selina blushed, for she thought her answer was given in such a tone as to make Alfred fancy that she intended to convey a more serious meaning, and a promise of full reliance on his word and assurance on every other occasion. Our hero noticed the blush which painted her cheek, and was obliged to confess within himself that his ideas were not unfounded, and that Selina already experienced the germination of a sincere but ill-starred affection.

The entrance of Mrs. and Mary Robson, and the speedy announcement of dinner, put an end to any farther conversation for the moment: but it was easy to perceive that Selina was in much better spirits than she had been during the last four-and-twenty hours.

At nine o'clock the carriage drove up to the door, and De Rosann assisted the ladies to ascend the steps. Mr. Robson pleaded urgent business, that would occupy him all the evening, as an excuse for not accompanying them; and De Rosann accordingly occupied his seat. The worthy banker was himself no friend to balls; he liked them well enough for young people who could dance; but he did not think it becoming for an old married man to be seen at places where youth and beauty were alone remarkable and *recherché*. Cards were equally his abhorrence; and on these occasions he was never so much delighted as when he could prevail upon a friend to take his place as *chaperon* to his family.

In twenty minutes the carriage stopped at a house in Jermyn-street. Alfred presented his hand to help the ladies in their descent from the vehicle, and then offered his arm to Mrs. Robson, while the two sisters followed close behind. They were speedily introduced to the splendid *salons* of gaiety and light, where the dancing had already commenced, and where the all-attentive Mrs. Wentworth was busily occupied in receiving her numerous visitors. To some she behaved distantly, but politely,—

to others more familiarly,—to several she spoke a few words as they passed on—and to a few she tendered two fingers of her right hand. Mrs. Robson was honoured by this last mark of intimacy ; De Rosann was presented in due form, and the Misses Robson were addressed by the fashionable hostess as “her young friends, Mary and Selina.” When this ceremony was accomplished, De Rosann conducted Mrs. Robson and her daughters to chairs at the farther end of the room ; and having engaged the hand of Selina for the next *quadrille*, he mingled with the gorgeously dressed crowd, under the supposition that during the intervals between each dance it was not customary to lounge near the seats occupied by the ladies ; such being the *etiquette* in his own country, whence, with a few exceptions, issue to the rest of Europe all the laws of politeness that control the society of the higher classes in their fashionable *reunions*.

“How do you do, De Rosann ?” cried a voice near him ; and when our hero turned round to reply to this familiar salutation, he recognized Belle-Rose, with a quizzing-glass to his right eye, staring most rudely at every lady who had any pretensions to beauty. He was dressed in the extreme of fashion,—a magnificent gold chain hung round his neck, and was apparently attached to as handsome a watch in his waistcoat pocket ; the glove was purposely withdrawn from his right hand, to display the valuable rings that glittered on his fingers, and his countenance was radiant with joy and self-satisfaction. He was leaning on the arm of a young Englishman, who spoke French with a horrible accent, and who repeated the words “*Monsieur le Comte*,” as often and as loudly as he could, in every answer he gave to his companion’s questions, or every remark he spontaneously uttered himself.

De Rosann replied to the *soi-disant* Count’s salutation with a low and distant bow. His wishes were understood ; Belle-Rose did not care to trouble him any farther ; and the pressure of the crowd, caused by the arrival of new guests, soon separated them from each other’s view.

“There is a man,” thought our hero, in his own mind, “who contrives to push himself into the fashionable circles of London, by the aid of a little swaggering, a little effrontery, and a little impudence.”

In a quarter of an hour the music re-commenced, and De Rosann sought his partner. Selina was dressed in virgin-white. Her hair was unadorned save by a single rose, which resembled her raiment, and a small wreath of pearls. Her neck-lace, her ear-rings, and her bracelets, were also composed of those modest beads. Alfred could not help regarding her with a look of admiration, and he thought of Eloise as he gazed. The idea of how far more transcendant was the loveliness of his own dear girl than the beauties of Selina, caused a smile of satisfaction to play upon his countenance ; and the self-deluded young lady did not fail to notice it, and appreciate its origin in her favour. Perhaps she fancied that she was not indifferent to our hero ; peradventure her fond imagination deceived her with the hope that she had pleased him : at all

events her features expressed a placid contentment and happiness. De Rosann remarked the renovation of her spirits, and supposed that his resolution to procrastinate his departure was the cause.

The gay *quadrille* commenced—"glanced the many twinkling feet" of those engaged in threading its mazes—and the enlivening sounds of the music fell joyously on every ear. Selina danced with grace, but without affectation; and her bewitching form was the admiration of several idlers who stood near to witness the evolutions of "Terpsichore's votaries." Amongst them our hero recognized the two gentlemen who were present when La Motte was exposed at Mr. Robson's table; and as he returned their salutation with a polite bow, he noticed that Mr. Jenkins had changed his silver spectacles for gold ones on this occasion, and that Mr. Goldsmith had added four new seals to the seven already pendant to his watch-chain. The recollection of the extraordinary efforts of their united imaginations at Mr. Robson's house called a smile to his lips, and at the same moment his glances met those of Selina, as she returned from completing the figure called *en avant deux*, or *l'été*. Alas! poor Selina—again she mistook the meaning of that smile—again she appropriated it as an offering to herself—again her heart felt light, her pride was gratified—and again she was mistaken!

It was not singular if Selina and De Rosann were the most remarkable couple that graced the *quadrille*. The handsome person of our hero, and the sylph-like form of his modest partner, could not fail to attract attention. His coal-black hair was parted above his forehead, with a species of "premeditated negligence"—if the reader will excuse and condescend to appreciate the meaning of the antithesis—which gave a peculiar expression to his countenance; his dark eyes were brilliant amidst that glare of even superfluous light; his slender figure was set off to advantage by the clothes which the prince of London tailors had fabricated. Selina was nearly as tall as himself; her years were evidently but two or three less than his own, and there appeared altogether a certain harmony and fitness in the mere fact of these two beings dancing together, that many a spectator inquired of his neighbour if they were not lovers. That which was doubt at first became magnified to certainty, when passed on with various amplifications from one to another. At length the report reached the ears of Belle-Rose, through the medium of his friend the Englishman; and the self-styled Count, with his natural inclination to lying, instantly declared that "his banker and intimate acquaintance, Robson, had confided the secret of De Rosann and Selina's engagement to him only the day before, when he went to draw for a few hundreds; that the happy couple were to be united on the first of the following month, and that Robson had settled ten thousand pounds upon his daughter." This news was speedily disseminated amongst the various acquaintances of the young Englishman on whose arm Belle-Rose was lounging; and in half an hour there was scarcely a single soul in the room that had not heard, and did not believe the report, save our hero, Mrs. Robson, and

her two daughters. Issuing from so respectable a source as the Count d'Elsigny, and emanating from an authority so good as a fellow-countryman of De Rosann—who for a moment would have thought of doubting the assertion?

When both the Misses Robson were engaged in the second *quadrille*, the gentlemen of the spectacles and the seals approached the spouse of their friend the banker, and entered into conversation.

"M. De Rosann is here, I see," said Mr. Goldsmith, after some common-place remarks.

"He was invited by the Colonel," returned Mrs. Robson. "They dined in each other's company at our house a few days ago; and although the Colonel assisted Wellington—or rather the Prussians—to beat the French, he does not dislike them individually."

"M. De Rosann appears a very nice young man," observed Mr. Jenkins, adjusting his spectacles.

"Of course, Mrs. Robson thinks so," added the other slyly.

"If such were not my opinion, I should scarcely suffer him to associate with my daughters," returned the banker's wife.

"Very natural! very natural!" exclaimed Mr. Goldsmith, rattling his seals: "but I did not think Robson had any secrets from an old friend."

"Secrets!" cried Mrs. Robson.

"O yes!—we are not blind, you know, my dear madam," chimed in Mr. Jenkins. "M. De Rosann is very good-looking, very genteel, and clever, for any thing that I know. Miss Selina is pretty, lady-like, and accomplished."

"I understand your allusion," said Mrs. Robson, somewhat haughtily; "but I can assure you that your suspicions are totally unfounded; so much so," continued the worthy lady, "that M. De Rosann himself purposes to leave London in three weeks or a month."

"Hem!" muttered he of the spectacles.

"Indeed!" exclaimed he of the seals.

"Therefore, if you have communicated to any one your suppositions, which are as groundless as your fanciful arrangement of the scene that took place some evenings ago at our house—relative to Lebrun, or La Motte, you know—"

"Ah! there is my friend Lord Walter!" cried Mr. Jenkins, hastily bowing to Mrs. Robson, and mingling with the crowd.

"Allow me to fetch you a glass of lemonade, madam," exclaimed Mr. Goldsmith immediately after; and he disappeared before Mrs. Robson had concluded her sentence.

The *quadrille* was now finished, and the Misses Robson were handed to their chairs by the gentlemen with whom they had been dancing. They were surprised to find their mother in an ill-humour, and enquired the reason; but she was too delicate to tell them the real truth, and satisfied them by an innocent invention. De Rosann interrupted the maternal evasion by a solicitation for the pleasure of dancing another *quadrille* with Miss Selina. He did not invite her sister, because she could not speak French, and it was useless

for two people to stand like statues in the middle of a ball-room. The delicacy of his motives was fully appreciated, and when explained to Mary by Selina, was thanked by a smile.

The minds of the scandal-hunting and inquisitive were more convinced than ever of the truth of the pervading report concerning the engagement subsisting between our hero and Miss Selina Robson, when they stood up to dance with each other a second time. It did not enter into the recollection of a soul that a friend could be thus twice honoured as well as a lover. Every indifferent glance that De Rosann cast upon the mild countenance of Selina, was noticed as a look of affection; and every time he uttered a word to his attentive partner, it was construed into a vow of tenderness and fidelity.

When the *quadrille* was concluded, De Rosann strolled into the card-room, and approached the *écarté*-table, round which a number of young men were gathered to bet their sovereigns, or to witness the game. A thin long-visaged person was seated on one side of the table, and the young Englishman, who accompanied Belle-Rose, was on the other. The name of the latter was Markham. The stakes were high, and the anxiety of the players excessive. Markham's opponent had already won considerable sums; and his success at this rubber appeared certain. Fortune, however, decided against him, and Markham gained the last point with an air of triumph. The other instantly left his seat, according to the general usage of the game, and made way for any one who was adventurous enough to occupy it. A sudden fancy seized hold of De Rosann's mind; and he instantly assumed the forsaken chair. No sooner had he thus rashly sate down to play with a stranger, than he heartily repented, and would have given much to be able to retire with decency; for Belle-Rose drew near the table at the same time, and, thrusting forward his head, desired Markham to bet five sovereigns for him.

"Very well, my dear Count," cried his friend: "I hope I shall not be the cause of your losing them."

"Never fear," returned Belle-Rose; and he placed himself at the back of Markham's chair to assist him with his advice.

De Rosann laid ten pounds upon the cloth, and turned up the king the first deal, besides making two points in addition to the one thus secured. Markham appeared uneasy, particularly as he had himself volunteered to cover half of the cash which our hero had wagered, and he had not yet produced a shilling.

"Why do you not lay down your money?" enquired Belle-Rose: "five sovereigns for yourself—and as much for me. If you refuse to take up M. De Rosann's stakes, suffer some one else to have the option, or not, as he chooses?"

"There is no hurry," said Markham, evidently embarrassed: "I am good for a paltry ten-pound note, I hope," he added with a faint smile, while one or two gentlemen, that were looking on, exchanged suspicious glances with each other.

De Rosann did not say a word, but pursued the game in a calm and quiet manner. Five minutes decided it in his favour.

"I owe you ten sovereigns, M. De Rosann," said Markham, a deep blush overspreading his countenance. "Will you give me my revenge?"

"Certainly," answered our hero; "if no one be desirous of taking your place, which, according to the laws of the game, you have forfeited."

"No—I am free to retain it, I fancy," returned Markham, having glanced hastily round upon the spectators near the table: "and as I have a twenty pound note in my pocket, we will put off the settlement of gains or losses till the fate of the next rubber be known."

"With pleasure," said our hero. "I shall leave the ten sovereigns I before staked on the board."

"You may advance another five for me, Markham," cried Belle-Rose, once more thrusting forward his head, having that evening expended a shilling's worth of Rowland's Macassar oil on his curls.

"Very well, Count," replied the toady. "Then I have ten sovereigns engaged once more, M. De Rosann."

"I will cover them," answered our hero calmly; and he placed the ten sovereigns he had already laid upon the table, in a heap.

"'Tis bad to play on credit," said the knight of the spectacles to his friend of the seals; for these two gentlemen had been attentive observers of the game ever since they left Mrs. Robson, the one to seek his friend Lord Walter, and the other to procure a glass of lemonade for the banker's spouse. But the former was totally unacquainted with Lord Walter; and Mrs. Robson never saw the latter with the promised beverage. The reminiscence of their foolish ideas about the drama, which they had seen at the Haymarket and the Adelphi, were somewhat disagreeable chords to touch upon.

"I hate credit: all debt is dishonest," said Mr. Goldsmith, in answer to his friend's remark.

"And yet your tailor told me the other day that you owed him five and thirty pounds," observed Mr. Jenkins.

"The same tailor who arrested you last Christmas, was it not?" retorted he of the seals.

"Three to one," cried De Rosann; and a solemn silence ensued around the table. At the next deal our hero marked the king, and threw down his cards, having the queen, knave, and ten in his hand.

"Will you allow me to try my luck once more?" enquired Markham, fumbling in his pocket.

"I had rather not continue the game," answered Alfred: "and I moreover see some one ready to take your place."

"Let us settle accounts, then—I owe you twenty pounds—ten for myself, and ten for my friend, the Count," said Markham, evidently disappointed at De Rosann's refusal to retain his seat, and still fumbling in his pocket. "Well—this is odd—I must have left it at home—I could have sworn that I had it about me—"

De Rosann said nothing, but waited patiently for the other to hand him over his money.

"This is most extraordinary," continued Markham, his face the colour of scarlet—every eye being fixed upon him—and our hero's tranquillity and silence appearing a mockery for the purpose of increasing his embarrassment. "I must have left my money at home: but the Count, of course, has his purse about him; he drew eight hundred pounds yesterday morning at Robson's. D'Elsigny—where are you?" but not even an echo answered "Where!" The noble Count had disappeared the moment De Rosann threw down his cards, and no reply was given to the voice of his friend.

"I am waiting, sir," said De Rosann coolly.

"Indeed I am sorry, M. De Rosann—very sorry—but I have evidently left my purse at home. Will you favour me with your address, that I may enclose you the amount the first thing in the morning?"

"And supposing you had won my money, Mr. Markham, you would have taken it: therefore I have been playing against my own interests."

"How—what!" exclaimed Markham, delighted at having an excuse to bully; "do you mean to insinuate that you stand a chance of loosing the few paltry pounds I owe you?"

"I think that nothing is more probable," answered our hero with the same imperturbable coolness.

"You are no gentleman!" shouted Markham.

"And you are a sharper!" returned Alfred gently: "but I do not choose to disturb the tranquillity of this hospitable mansion—our kind hosts must not regret the invitation they have vouchsafed to me, at least; there is my address, sir," continued De Rosann, throwing a card upon the table; "may I solicit your's?"

Markham hastily complied with our hero's request, or, rather, command, and shortly after withdrew in the greatest possible confusion; while all admired and expressed their approbation of the gentlemanly conduct of the young Frenchman.

But what had become of Belle-Rose? The moment he saw that his friend had lost the game, he gave his waistcoat-pocket one tap with his fingers, to convince himself that it was empty, and suddenly made his escape from the *écarté*-table. Arrived at the door of the room set apart exclusively to dancing, he found the passage barred by the ladies and gentlemen occupied in a *quadrille*; and all hopes of passing round, without treading on the toes of the old dowagers and maiden aunts, who sate in solemn state against the walls to witness the amusements of "the young people," were totally vain. Belle-Rose was therefore obliged to wait at the door, which formed the communication between the card-room and the dancing-room, until the *quadrille* was finished.

In about a minute he felt his arm slightly pulled; and turning hastily round, saw himself confronted by a gentleman, whose nose supported an immense pair of gold spectacles, and whose face he recollected to have seen peering over the shoulders of the loiterers round the card-table.

"*Monsieur le Comte*," began our old acquaintance, Mr. Jenkins.

"What the devil would you have with me?" enquired Belle-Rose in French, his voice being any thing but suave and dulcet at the moment.

Mr. Jenkins gave no reply, but pointed to the card-table, and made a sign with the fingers of his right hand in the out-stretched palm of his left. Belle-Rose understood full-well the meaning of the worthy gentlemen, and turned his back upon him with a look of the most sovereign contempt, purposely placing the heel of his shoe on the officious individual's toes at the same time. Mr. Jenkins gave a terrible start, and fell with such violence against his friend of the seals, who was endeavouring to force a passage through the crowd at the door, that the watch-chain and its appendages rattled like pebbles against a window. When their confusion, into which this sudden shock had thrown them, was somewhat abated, Mr. Jenkins looked around to discover Belle-Rose. But the music had ceased—the *quadrille* was concluded—and the *soi-disant* Count had taken advantage of the momentary bustle to make his escape. Arrived in the hall, a footman in gorgeous livery demanded of the retiring guest whether he had brought a cloak or great-coat with him; and as the eye of Belle-Rose fell at the same instant upon a magnificent mantle lined with sables, he replied in the affirmative, although he had no real claim to the said garment. After a proper delay in pretending to search for his own property, he unhooked the splendid mantle that had before attracted his attention; and having cast it negligently on his left shoulder, he placed half-a-crown in the footman's hand, and quitted the house, totally reckless of what might become of his friend Markham.

When De Rosann rejoined Mrs. Robson and her daughters, he found them all three extremely anxious on his account—particularly Selina, in whose eye glistened a tear. The report of his quarrel with Markham, and the certainty of a duel, had reached their ears; but the particulars of the tale were entirely in favour of our hero; and while his friends deplored the disagreeable occurrence, they could not help admiring his noble conduct and manly courage.

"I hope the dispute will lead to no desperate result," said Selina in a low voice, that was almost choked with an internal emotion which she vainly endeavoured to conceal.

"The person with whom I had a few words," answered De Rosann, "is most probably a coward; and I suspect that there is but little chance of his seeking an honourable satisfaction."

"You wish to make the matter appear more trifling than it really is," continued Selina: "I am, however, certain it is serious—and I implore you, M. De Rosann—if you have any regard—"

Selina stopped short in the middle of her sentence; and when she raised her eyes to De Rosann's countenance, she saw that he was gazing on her in astonishment. An unpleasant impression was immediately conveyed to her mind. She thought that if he felt the slightest interest in her welfare, or that if he knew she was attached to him, he would not have looked at her with wonder.

out with gratitude and delight, as she was about to implore him not to dare danger, nor be induced to combat against a common swindler. Alfred noticed that the excitement, which had marked the commencement of her supplication, verged into a melancholy expression that betrayed an inward sorrow returning with reflection; and he endeavoured to direct the conversation to other subjects. All his attempts were, however, unavailing; Selina perpetually referred to the probability of a duel; and would only abandon the subject when De Rosann assured her that no such fatal result was to be anticipated.

It was not until four o'clock in the morning that he retired to his couch, where his eyes were soon closed in slumber; and while he dreamt of his faithful Eloise so far away from him in another clime, he wist not that a young heart was filled with his image, and that he was the innocent cause of pain to the unfortunate victim of a love whose increasing fervor experienced no return.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE RESULT.

DE ROSANN did not awake till a late hour; and some minutes elapsed ere he could compose his ideas, so as to review his conduct of the preceding evening. The certainty that he had made a deep impression upon the heart of the too sensitive Selina, was a subject of much more grief to our hero than the probability of being shortly obliged to risk his life in a duel. His generous disposition could not do otherwise than sincerely commiserate the situation of the unfortunate girl, and deeply deplore her misplaced affections. He therefore made up his mind to seek an explanation with her as speedily as possible. That explanation he might readily bring about by hinting at his attachment to Eloise—a circumstance as yet unrevealed even to Mr. Robson; and, in case the reader should marvel at this silence and reserve towards so excellent a friend, let us hasten to apologize for our hero. He had retained his love-affair in his own breast, fearful that if Mrs. Clayton should accidentally have occasion to correspond with Mr. Robson, the circumstance might reach her ears; and De Rosann knew she would naturally be offended at his presumption in declaring he was destined to receive the hand of Eloise, when the mother so positively refused to listen to his suit in favour of her daughter. He now repented of this excess of delicacy; he reproached himself for not having merely hinted, a few days ago, that his heart was devoted to another; and he made up his mind to repair, as quickly as he could, the incipient injury already done.

With regard to his quarrel, we have before stated that he did not suffer it to annoy him. He possessed the daring and reckless courage of a Frenchman; he did not trouble himself about the pos-

sibility of being killed, or, perhaps, mutilated for life ; and when the recollection intruded itself upon his memory, he dismissed it with an expression of contempt, to the effect, “ that it was a *bagatelle* unworthy of consideration.” It is in this particular point that the Frenchman differs so materially from the Englishman ; not that the discrepancy consists in the courage of the one, and the cowardice of the other, because such an assertion would be ridiculous and false in the extreme. An Englishman is as brave as a Frenchman ; but the valour of the former is mingled with caution and prudence ; and the dauntlessness of the latter is blind, and indifferent to consequences. Thus was it, that often on the field of battle the magnanimity and lion-daring of the sons of Gaul were rendered unavailing, and necessitated to succumb, by the cool and calculating courage of those who fought under the British standard. The Frenchman is all vivacity and rashness ; he is like the mettled steed that hears the bugle of the huntsman and the howling of the dogs ; he often experiences defeat and disgrace, by aiming at impossibilities in a moment of excitement : he rushes headlong upon the bayonet, and does not wait to wrest it from the enemy’s grasp.

While De Rosann was seated at his breakfast-table, he was surprised by a visit from Mr. Robson.

“ I have just been informed of your dispute last night with a Mr. Markham,” said the worthy banker, panting for breath, and throwing himself upon a chair ; “ and I hastened to ascertain the particulars. Is it likely that you will hear any more of the individual, who, according to the account Selina gave me, is nothing more than a common swindler or adventurer.”

“ I am doubtful,” returned De Rosann carelessly. “ But how is your family after the fatigues of the ball ?”

“ The devil take the ball !” cried Mr. Robson. “ You seem to think as much of a very—*very* serious matter, as I do of the greatest trifle.”

“ Do you allude to the probability of a duel ?” asked De Rosann, sipping his chocolate with the most ineffable *sang-froid*.

“ Certainly, my young friend ; in England, it is not customary to regard life as an object without value. Existence bears a high *per-centage* amongst us.”

“ If you wish me to reflect for one moment upon the matter,” said Alfred, assuming a grave look to oblige the good-natured banker, who was exceedingly anxious on his friend’s account, “ I must obey you ; and the result of my rumination will be, that if Mr. Markham can possibly muster the money to pay me, he will also find the courage to fight. He has a reputation at stake ; and a duel would restore him to public favour.”

“ In that case, my dear Rosann, I must find you a second,” cried Mr. Robson : “ but I hope to God that Markham, or whatever his name may be, will look in vain for the cash. You know I would myself willingly act as your friend on such an occasion—but a banker, and the father of a family—not a young man either—”

“ Do not think of offering an apology,” interrupted our hero.

"Should I require a second, you will procure me one—and that is sufficient."

"Adieu, then, for the present: I must return to my counting-house, which I never quit of a morning, save on urgent occasions."

Mr. Robson had not left the room five minutes, when one of the waiters entered, and informed De Rosann that the Count d'Elsigny desired to speak to him on very particular business. Our hero ordered the servant to show the Count to his apartment; and in a moment Belle-Rose swaggered into the room.

"My dear Rosann," said he, wiping the perspiration from his forehead with a perfumed cambric handkerchief, "I am come upon a pleasant little affair, which will doubtless afford four people an excellent morning's amusement."

"I already divine the vicarious object of your visit," returned De Rosann coolly; "and beg you will hasten to apprise me if I be right."

"In the first place, Markham has sent you the twenty pounds," continued Belle-Rose, laying the money upon the table; "and as I have expended every farthing of the cash for which I sold the papers to you, or to Mr. Robson, I should be very much obliged if you would lend me these paltry bank-notes till I can repay you. Remember, I have religiously preserved our secret, my dear De Rosann."

"Keep the money, in God's name," exclaimed our hero; "and do not make a merit of having refrained from divulging that which would ruin your speculations, as well as injure me, perhaps, in the opinion of my friends, who, unfortunately, are not free from the usually-prevailing prejudices."

"I like your harangue very much, De Rosann," said Belle-Rose; "and I do not hesitate to thank you for the cash. By the by, do you not think I am an essential ornament to a ball-room, and a fit representative of the *noblesse* of our nation?"

"Be so kind as to come to the point; I am in a hurry to go out for an hour or two, and have no time to waste in idle conversation."

"Three words, then," cried Belle-Rose, starting up, and running his fingers through locks teeming with pomatum, or bears'-grease: "to-morrow morning at six o'clock—pistols, of course—St. John's Wood—near the Regent's Park—each with one friend—we will take the surgeon."

"Agreed!" ejaculated De Rosann; and Belle-Rose withdrew, much to our hero's satisfaction.

The only preparation that De Rosann made, was to enclose the papers of the late Marquess de Deneville in an envelope, which he carefully sealed, and directed to Mr. Clayton. He then wrote instructions to that gentleman, explaining the nature of the documents, and the manner in which they fell into his hands at the farm-house of Louis Dorval: and he enclosed a letter for Eloise, wherein he expressed the unchanged and fervent love he bore her, and his sincere hope that she might still be happy in her choice of a husband to become her legal protector and the partner of her

fortunes. These epistles were to be forwarded, with the deeds, to their proper destination, in case of Alfred's fall.

Having thus arranged his affairs, our hero hastened to Thread-needle-street, and informed Mr. Robson of all that had passed since they separated an hour or two before. The kind-hearted banker could not conceal his agitation and alarm at the danger to which De Rosann was exposed: he however promised to call upon him early the following morning with a friend, and hinted that it would be better not to inform the ladies of the anticipated meeting. De Rosann perfectly acquiesced in Mr. Robson's opinion, and did not even throw himself in the way of a multiplicity of enquiries, which would doubtless have taken place, had he proceeded to the drawing-room to pay his respects to Mrs. Robson and her daughters.

In the mean time Selina suffered the most excruciating torments: and her internal agony was the more acute, because she was obliged to conceal it from the observation of her mother and sister. Hour after hour passed away, and De Rosann did not make his appearance as usual. Her agitated mind instantly pictured an exaggeration of all the most horrible results that could possibly have ensued from a duel; for she was perfectly convinced, that the dispute would end in a hostile meeting. She fancied she saw Alfred bleeding, pale, and dying on the fatal plain: then she thought, that perhaps he was already gone to another world, and that his heart was pierced with a deadly weapon. Never was suspense so terrible, till the hour of dinner brought her father from his office; and in a trembling voice she enquired, if he had seen M. De Rosann? The banker answered in the affirmative, adding, that the quarrel with Mr. Markham would most probably lead to no disagreeable consequences, and that particular business alone prevented our hero from calling on Mrs. and the Misses Robson in the course of the day. Selina felt somewhat relieved by these assurances; but she still saw the probability of a duel, and in vain essayed to banish her unpleasant ideas entirely from her imagination.

As early as five o'clock on the following morning, did Mr. Robson knock at the door of De Rosann's bed-chamber. Our hero was already dressed, and about to sit down to breakfast. He welcomed the banker with the utmost cordiality, and was surprised to see that no one accompanied him. But before he had time to enquire the reason, a gentleman made his appearance at the top of the stairs, and was instantly recognised by Mr. Robson, as the intended second. He was accordingly introduced to De Rosann, to whom he expressed his sorrow, at acquiring the honour of Alfred's acquaintance, under circumstances so peculiarly disagreeable; he however declared his willingness to assist our hero to the utmost of his ability, as a hostile meeting was apparently unavoidable. Mr. Herbert—for that was the gentleman's name—spoke French with tolerable fluency; and it was chiefly on this account that he had been requested by Mr. Robson to act as De Rosann's friend on the occasion.

To the astonishment of both the banker and Mr. Herbert, neither

of whom could touch a morsel, De Rosann ate with a prodigious appetite; and when Mr. Robson was no longer able to contain his astonishment at such an extraordinary instance of *sang froid*, the young man coolly observed, "that he did not dare venture to encounter the chilly atmosphere with an empty stomach." A smile of satisfaction played upon the countenance of Mr. Herbert, as our hero made this remark; for he could not help feeling a momentary pride in the courage of his principal.

"This is your first affair of honour," said the banker, addressing his youthful friend, and vainly endeavouring to swallow a piece of toast.

"My first, and perhaps my last," answered De Rosann, attacking the breast of a cold fowl, which he had already despoiled of its wings.

"The idea does not rob you of your appetite," remarked Mr. Herbert. "I was engaged as second to a noble lord about six weeks ago," he continued; "and while I took a cup of tea at the breakfast table, he walked up and down the room in the greatest possible agitation."

"I do not wonder at his emotion," cried the banker, scarcely able to repress a shudder.

"And perhaps he was not a coward after all," said De Rosann, helping himself to some cold pigeon-pie and a huge slice of bread.

"No—on the contrary," returned Mr. Herbert, "when we arrived upon the ground, he was as cool as I am at this moment. He fought with a German baron—'twas at Wormwood Scrubs—"

"And what was the result?" enquired the banker, for the sake of saying something, while his limbs shivered, and his heart palpitated violently, as if he himself were one of the principals.

"The German was wounded in the leg, and has been lame ever since," answered Mr. Herbert, forgetting that this information could not sound very consolatory to the ears of a nervous person, about to engage in an affair of honour.

"He was pointed out to me the night before last, at Mrs. Wentworth's ball," remarked De Rosann, as he commenced a second attack on the pigeon pie, to the astonishment of Mr. Robson.

"Allow me to inform you, that we have not ten minutes to spare, M. De Rosann," cried his second; "I always like to be punctual, even if I and my principal be not the first on the ground."

"I shall wait for you here—and God preserve you, my dear boy," exclaimed Robson, wiping away a tear. "Now go—I need not tell you to keep up your spirits—and once more, may God bless you!"

De Rosann endeavoured to console the excellent old man, by assurances of there being but little danger; and having succeeded in restoring him to partial tranquillity, he followed Herbert down stairs, and jumped into the cabriolet that waited for him at the door.

Markham and Belle-Rose had already arrived at the place of destination, when our hero and his second descended from the

vehicle in the immediate vicinity of the appointed spot. Mr. Herbert and the self-styled Count d'Elsigny, proceeded to charge the pistols forthwith; while De Rosann watched the motions of his antagonist, whose face was ashy pale, and whose uneven steps, as he paced up and down the ground, betokened anything save self-possession and composure. He was evidently annoyed that the two seconds did not endeavour to arrange the matter amicably; but he dared not interfere in their proceedings, nor retract from the challenge he had somewhat rashly given.

When Belle-Rose and Herbert had charged the pistols in each others presence, they drew lots to decide by whom the ground should be measured, and the signal given. Chance pronounced in favour of Belle-Rose; and he instantly commenced his duties: but he took such uncommonly small paces, when employed in tracing the distance which was to intervene between the spots occupied by the hostile parties, that Markham could with difficulty conceal his terror. De Rosann merely smiled at the friendly conduct of his ancient companion, and received the pistol from the hand of Mr. Herbert, as if it were a handsome present, tendered on a more jovial occasion. Not that there was anything cruel, or blood-thirsty in the calmness of our hero; his composure was purely the courageous indifference of a brave man, who does not fear to meet death face to face.

De Rosann and Markham now took their proper stations, and Belle-Rose stood at a little distance, making the third point of an imaginary right-angled triangle, of which the antagonists were the remaining two. And now all was ready—the foemen confronted each other—Belle-Rose enquired in a loud voice if they were prepared—both answered in the affirmative, one boldly, the other tremulously—and the handkerchief fell to the ground. The shots were fired almost at the same instant—and neither De Rosann nor Markham were touched. After a lengthened discussion between the seconds, the pistols were charged again, and presented to the combatants. Markham declared in a whisper to Belle-Rose, that he was satisfied, and that he did not wish to renew the combat. But the *soi-disant* Count cut him short with an assurance, “that he had too much regard for the honour of his principal to withdraw him, before he had either killed his man, or was winged himself.” Markham ventured another remonstrance, and Belle-Rose declared that he should either fight, or renounce his friendship for ever. This assertion terminated the doubts and repugnance of the unfortunate Markham; and Herbert stepped forward with the handkerchief in his hand, to occupy in his turn, the spot which Belle-Rose had just left. The signal was given a second time, the pistols were again levelled against two human beings by each other, the report of the murderous weapons echoed loudly on the ear, and Markham fell wounded to the ground.

The surgeon, who had waited at a little distance, and who had attentively watched the progress of the duel, now rushed forward like a vulture on his prey, and proceeded to examine the fallen champion. The ball had grazed his right side, just above the hip

out the wound was neither dangerous nor severe. De Rosann assisted Belle-Rose and Herbert to convey him to the carriage in which he had arrived; and the surgeon walked by their side, holding forth, in a very learned discourse, on what might have been the results, if the ball had lodged in the sufferer's body. But as only Mr. Herbert and the unfortunate sufferer himself understood the language he spoke, the surgeon's oration was not productive of any wonderful effect.

When our hero and his second had thus done all they could to aid the wounded man, they recommended him to the care of Belle-Rose, and sought their own vehicle, to return to town. On their arrival at the hotel, Mr. Robson, who had anxiously posted himself at the window, during the last half-hour, and who began to think the time very long, received De Rosann with open arms, and embraced him with such force, that Alfred was fain to cry out. Mr. Herbert was obliged to submit to the same ceremony, for having brought back the belligerent hero safe; and, having made both second and principal promise to dine with him that very afternoon, in order to drink a glass of champagne to the victor's success, the banker withdrew from the hotel, and returned to his own house, where he found a comfortable breakfast awaiting his arrival.

Selina was the first to notice the air of satisfaction and joy, with which her father entered the room; and Mrs. Robson expressed her curiosity, to know what particular business could have made him quit his warm bed at so early an hour.

"Only a little affair, my love," cried the banker, rubbing his hands together, and seating himself at the table. "It was not exactly in my line, it is true: but a friend in such a predicament—"

"Lord! Mr. Robson, how mysterious you are!" exclaimed his better half: "cannot you entrust us with your secret?"

"No secret, my dear—no secret, I assure you: 'tis all over now—merely a meeting—"

"What! of Williams the stockbroker's creditors at five o'clock in the morning?" interrupted Mrs. Robson.

"Not at all: 'twas a meeting of a different nature," returned the banker, who seemed delighted to keep his fair spouse in suspense; "a meeting at which you will never be, my love—a meeting, in fine, between Messieurs Markham and De Rosann!"

"A duel!" cried Selina, her countenance becoming deadly pale, and her bosom heaving a deep-drawn sigh.

"Our friend is safe, thank God!" continued the banker, helping himself to a hot buttered roll and an egg. "He behaved nobly, I understand—"

"You were not present, then, papa," said Mary.

"No, my love; Mr. Herbert officiated as M. De Rosann's second, and I remained at the hotel until their return. Markham was wounded in the ribs; but Alfred is untouched."

"Thank God!" cried Selina, involuntarily, her pale features becoming suddenly animated by an expression of joy, and then as

rapidly suffused in blushes, when she noticed her mother and sister regarding her with peculiar attention.

“One would think you were in love with M. De Rosann, Selina,” exclaimed Mary; “you are so energetic in your expressions of gratitude to the Almighty for having spared him, and your countenance changed so often, an observer could not have helped noticing your emotions.”

“Sister,” said Selina, calmly, “your remarks are unkind and ungenerous to a degree. I know M. De Rosann much better than you do, because my frequent visits to France with my father have enabled me to acquire a knowledge of his language: and a heart that is not made of iron cannot fail to feel rejoiced at the escape of one who saved us all from ruin, by exposing the treachery of a pretended friend.”

“You speak like my own daughter, Selina!” cried Mr. Robson; “and Mary was wrong to reproach you.”

“Nay—my intention was not wilfully to wound your feelings, dear sister; I spoke with levity, it is true—but more in pleasantry than in earnest.”

“Let us drop the subject, Mary,” said Selina, wiping away a tear from her eye, while her mother began to think that the report she had heard at the ball was not entirely void of foundation, and that her younger daughter and De Rosann were really attached to each other. She however determined to hold her peace for the present, and watch their glances and their manners more particularly, ere she suffered her mind to form any decided opinion relative to the matter.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE PROSPECTUS.

THE mind of Eloise experienced considerable relief when the receipt of De Rosann's letters communicated the certainty of his obtaining a full pardon at the hands of Charles the Tenth. Nor less did her uncle feel the purest satisfaction, as he reflected that a weighty obstacle to the match would thus indubitably be removed from the mind of his sister-in-law. The contents of Leblond's epistle pleaded as an ample apology for our hero's stay in London, both with Eloise and Mr. Clayton; and although the former sighed when she recollected how slowly slip away the weary hours when separated from those we love, she could not avoid inwardly applauding Alfred's courage, in thus determining to support an absence, which his honour rendered necessary, and which would be productive of such favourable results. She looked forward to the happy hours they might yet anticipate to pass in each other's society; and often—oh! often did she press De Rosann's letter to her lips, and to her bosom, when she retired to her bed-chamber to peruse it. Mr. Clayton was delighted at the brightening prospect which now animated the future; and he ceased to torment

his sister-in-law about her obstinacy, as he called it, in refusing to give her sanction to that which, sooner or later, she would be obliged to permit, if not approve.

De Rosann had begged Mr. Clayton and Eloise, in his letters to them both, not to inform Mrs. Clayton of the promise of pardon which he had received; and his wishes were strictly complied with, although he gave no reason for the request, which nevertheless did not appear singular; as both Eloise and her uncle divined the real truth the moment they perused their respective epistles, and guessed that De Rosann was desirous of surprising the conscientious mother, by producing his remission from all punishment and all stigma, when he should have obtained the precious document, and when he returned to implore the now unrelenting parent to accord him the hand of her daughter. Mrs. Clayton was therefore kept entirely in the dark relative to these proceedings. She however noticed the animated countenance of Eloise, and perceived that the beautiful girl's spirits gradually improved as the colour returned to her cheeks; and she secretly applauded herself for the firmness with which she had acted, triumphantly observing to her brother-in-law at the same time, that change of air and scene had not after all been without their effect.

Mr. Clayton longed to drop a hint, that perhaps she was deceived concerning the real cause of this change in her daughter's appearance and manners; but the entrance of Eloise, just as the first word trembled on the tip of his tongue, made him check his imprudent spirit of communicativeness, or of contradiction, and put an end to the conversation.

"Here is a strange-looking man, uncle, who desires to speak with you," said Eloise, vainly endeavouring to suppress a smile. "I think I have seen him before—but where I cannot recollect. He is a Frenchman, fat, short, and red in the face."

"What is his business?" inquired Mr. Clayton.

"He insists upon seeing you; that is all I can make him say," returned Eloise. "The servant waits your answer."

"Let him come in, then," cried the uncle.

The visitor was accordingly desired to enter; and Mr. Clayton instantly recognised Champignon, "the best cook in Europe."

"Pray be seated, and acquaint me with your business," said Mr. Clayton, rather sharply; for the larder yet teemed with *patés de foie gras* and *cervelas sans ail*.*

"I hope my presence is no intrusion," said Champignon, seating himself on the edge of a chair, and drawing from his coat-pocket a large roll of papers, which he laid upon the table: "but I recollected that M. De Rosann appeared to be somewhat acquainted with you," he continued, addressing Mr. Clayton, "if one might judge from the way you walked together, as close as two pigeons in a pie, or a couple of capons on a spit—"

* Bologna sausages without garlic.

"Well, what then?" cried Mr. Clayton, impatiently, while Eloise was ready to die of curiosity to know what the gastronome could want with De Rosann.

"I recollected your apparent intimacy together," proceeded Champignon; "and having occasion to write to M. De Rosann, I have ventured to trouble you for his address."

"And what the devil have you to say to M. De Rosann?" inquired Mr. Clayton, surveying the comical countenance of the gastronome with a severe glance, which so terrified the unfortunate wretch, that he made a bound upon his chair, and missing the edge fell heavily on the floor. This circumstance restored Mr. Clayton to his usual good humour; and he said something consolatory to poor Champignon to give him courage, while Eloise offered him a glass of *liqueur*, which he accepted with many thanks, declaring that it was almost as good as his own, and that he would send up a bottle the moment he returned home.

"You asked me what I had to say to M. De Rosann," observed Champignon, when he had swallowed the *eau-de-vie de Dantzic*, and placed the glass upon the table: "I will tell you, since you know how to treat me with the consideration due to my talents and culinary acquirements. It has been a favourite idea of mine for some time past, to establish a *restaurant* in every principal town of France—"

"A mighty undertaking!" cried Mr. Clayton.

"Yes; and for a mighty purpose, too," added the gastronome.

"What is it? I am very curious to be acquainted with your schemes."

"For the purpose of serving up, in the only true and proper manner, my newly invented dish—the *cotelettes à la quadrille*. To attain this desirable end, I have caused a number of prospectuses to be printed—"

"Not under your own name?" interrupted Mr. Clayton.

"No—certainly not; but under that of Citron, which I have adopted, and which is painted over my shop. And as M. De Rosann was kind to me on several occasions, I do not doubt but that he will distribute these circulars amongst his friends,"

"He is in England at this moment," said Mr. Clayton.

"So much the better!" cried Champignon: "perhaps he will be able to obtain the consent of some rich bankers or merchants to place their names on my list of shareholders."

"It is a joint-stock company, then?" observed Mr. Clayton.

"Precisely: and a very respectable list of names is already down on the subscription-book," returned Champignon, taking another roll of papers from his pocket.

"Have they all paid?—for ready money is the essential."

"O no; not yet. But I may have the cash when I choose to write for it; as they are every one in situations where coin is of no use to them."

"They must be the King's ministers, at least, if that be the case," thought Mr. Clayton, in his own mind.

"Pray cast your eyes over the list," said Champignon, handing

several sheets of paper tacked together to Mr. Clayton, who, according to the gastronome's wish, read as follows:—

“*Jean Beauvisage*, chevalier, one share of five hundred francs. Le General *Trotte-mal*, one share of a thousand francs. Le Baron *Feu-d'enfer*, two shares of a hundred francs each. Le Comte *Pousse-pain*, one share of five hundred francs. *Michel Cochon*, alias *Leyer-de-main*, five shares of a hundred francs each. *Mathieu Vilain*, alias *Le Beau*, one share—but methinks, M. Champignon,” cried Mr. Clayton, interrupting himself in the midst of the list, “that these names are somewhat singular; for instance, I see a little lower down, Le Marquis de *Bel-œil*, alias *Louche*, Le Duc de *Gros Nez*, *M. Polisson*, *M. Doux-doux*, surnamed *Le Voleur*, and a host of other nomenclatures, half with high titles, and half with extraordinary *aliases*.”

“Ah! ah! you never would suspect the wit of that,” cried Champignon.

“How? What do you mean? Is it possible there is a French duke named *Gros Nez*, or a French marquis called *Bel-œil*, alias *Louche*? Noblemen never have *aliases*: and if the Chamber of Peers be formed of individuals with such droll appellations, I should think the president must indulge in an occasionally hearty laugh when calling over their names. For instance, how singular would it appear, did the Duke of *Gros Nez* rise and say, ‘After the excellent remarks that have just fallen from my friend the Marquis of *Bel-œil*, alias *Louche*, in answer to the misrepresentations made by the Baron *Feu-d'Enfer*, in reference to the amendment which the Count *Pousse-pain* is desirous of making to the bill,’ &c. &c. It is impossible, M. Champignon, that such titles can exist!”

“If they do not exist in the Chamber of Peers, I have heard them mentioned elsewhere,” said Champignon, not at all discomfited by this attack on the veracity of his list.

“Where, in the name of God?” cried Mr. Clayton.

“At the galleys,” answered the gastronome, drily.

“It was there you met M. De Rosann, I suppose,” exclaimed Mrs. Clayton, with a contemptuous sneer, while the unkind remark cut Eloise to the soul. Mr. Clayton noticed the effect it produced upon his niece, and hastened to get rid of Champignon, who had commenced a long explanation relative to the kindness of the convicts in promising to become purchasers of shares, and the use he made of these names and nick-names, some of which latter were titles, to ornament his list. Mr. Clayton cut him short, by promising to send his prospectuses to De Rosann, and at length succeeded in conducting him as far as the street, where the gastronome turned round, made two or three very low bows, and took his leave of Mr. Clayton with a thousand thanks for his kindness.

“Eloise, my love,” said the kind uncle, when he had once more returned to the drawing-room, “I met this morning the interesting girl that you so particularly admired as a songstress the other day, and who sung Orlando's Song so sweetly. She was better dressed

than before, and was walking with a middle-aged peasant, who appeared to be her father. The sight of her put me in mind of the happy times when you and De Rosann were accustomed to mingle your voices together, and wile away many an hour with music."

"You do not think Eloise has renounced singing for ever, do you, William?" cried Mrs. Clayton somewhat angrily, as the name of De Rosann invariably called forth some harsh expression from her lips, although her usual manners were gentleness and benevolence in the extreme, and her ordinary behaviour towards her daughter kind and affectionate.

"I hope not," said Mr. Clayton. "But, methinks, that the harp and the piano have been sadly neglected lately."

"It is nearly a year since I touched either" murmured Eloise with a sigh. "Once I was devoted to music, as I was attached to drawing: but lately, the song has been neglected as much as the pencil—and sorrow and grief, and meditation, have occupied the time they usually employed."

These last words were said in a whisper; but Mrs. Clayton marked the cloud on her daughter's brow, and the tear in her eye, and hastened to change the conversation. Mr. Clayton was, however, obstinate; his mind could not be diverted from the topic that suddenly interested it; a sort of whim, or caprice, remained to be gratified; and he was not to be beaten off his track by the subtleties of his sister-in-law, who vainly endeavoured to persuade him to continue *La Siège de la Rochelle*—one of Madame de Genlis' novels—which he was reading.

"I am in no humour to waste my time over a silly romance," cried Mr. Clayton. "It seems as if a year had made a sad difference in our little pleasures and amusements. Eloise, my love—do you think that you can recollect one of those sweet songs—"

"How obstinate you are, William!" interrupted Mrs. Clayton: "you are perfectly aware that I desired Eloise to assist me in this embroidery—and you still persist in attracting her attention to other matters."

"Eloise can very well devote an hour to her uncle," said Mr. Clayton, with an appealing glance to his beautiful niece.

"If you wish me to sing *Le Portrait Charmant*, or my old English ballad of the 'Knights of Palestine'—which is so very long and so tedious—my dear uncle, I will gladly oblige you: but perhaps mamma is averse to music this afternoon."

"On the contrary, my dear child," exclaimed Mrs. Clayton: "nothing would delight me more than to hear your sweet voice joined to the harmony of one of your favourite instruments. I merely combated your uncle's wishes for a moment, because I fancied that you yourself were unwilling to indulge us with an air."

Eloise accordingly drew a chair towards her harp, ran her delicate fingers lightly over the strings, then paused to recollect the words of a song which she had never warbled since the day of her lover's arrest under a terrible accusation; and, having convinced herself of the fidelity of her memory, she commenced the following air:—

LE PORTRAIT CHARMANT.

O BEAUTEOUS counterpart of him I love,
 Delightful pledge of tenderness to me,
 Sent by thy lord, to say that I might prove
 At least some solace in regarding thee !

There are the features that I once admired,
 The tender look, and loftiness of air ;
 And when I press thee to my bosom, fired
 With hope, it seems as if himself were there.

But, oh ! thou hast not half thy master's charms,
 Mute—passionless spectator of my woe :
 The joys we tasted in each other's arms,
 Rush to my mind, and bid the tear-drops flow.

Extenuate my language, if severe—
 Forgive the wretchedness that fills my heart ;
 And though thou dost but represent him here,
 Ever in thee I find his counterpart.

“Your voice has not lost its harmony, my dear Eloise, nor your memory its tenacity,” cried Mr. Clayton, his countenance radiant with satisfaction, as the last words of this pathetic strain died away from his niece's lips.

“It is a sweet song, and exactly suited to your voice, Eloise,” added Mrs. Clayton with a smile expressive of contentment ; for she fondly hoped that her daughter's sudden elevation of spirits was to be attributed to change of air and scenery.

“*Le Portrait Charmant*,” said Eloise, turning round her head towards her mother without quitting her seat, “is supposed to have been sung by Madame de Chateaubriand, when she received a piece of money on which was stamped the head of Francis the First.”

“True !” exclaimed Mr. Clayton. “And now, dear Eloise, as you have retained your chair, do oblige me with your other favourite song, as I am not certain of finding you in the same musical humour to-morrow, and am therefore desirous of profiting by the present occasion.”

“If I were as miserable as possible, uncle,” returned Eloise with the amiable *naïveté* so natural to an innocent maiden whose thoughts and whose actions are alike as pure as the hymns of cherubim, “I would always make an effort to please those I love :” and having uttered these words, she turned once more towards her harp, and sang the following singular air to the melody she extracted from the tightened cords of that delicious instrument.

THE KNIGHTS OF PALESTINE.

A LEGEND OF THE OLDEN TIME.

It was when the eventful day was done,
 That witnessed the capture of Ascalon,
 From the Moslem king by the Christians won,
 Who fought for the shrine of the Virgin's Son ;

And when Phœbus' course to the west had run,
 And Cynthia's silent reign had begun,
 That out of the camp, attended by none,
 Towards the city walls rode an armed one.

He stopped at the castle-postern straight,
 And tarried no moment to meditate,
 But knocked full hard at the massive gate;
 Nor long was the time that he had to wait,
 For a warder, appearing at the grate,
 Demanded who thither might come so late;
 When the knight replied, that affairs of weight
 Had brought him there with a need so great.

"Show me a sign, that I may obey,
 Else never, Sir Knight, wilt thou pass this way:—
 Such are the orders none gainsay."
 "—Shame to thy hair—thy locks so gray,
 If thou sendest me out in the night astray,
 When the sickly beams of the moon scarce play
 On the road where my journey back must lay."
 "—Sir Knight, you will manage as best you may."

"—Of thy threats and thine orders all despite,
 Will I enter the gates this very night;
 Though the door be guarded by every sprite
 That avoids the earth in broad day-light,
 And in darkness comes to mortal sight,
 Against the legions of hell to fight,
 Were to me but a pastime of delight,
 Since it leads to Celestine," quoth the Knight.

Then the warrior turned to his charger there—
 He seized his mace and raised it in air:—
 The dint of its force he did not spare,
 But to deal the blow his arm 'gan prepare;—
 And, in sooth, the axe was of weight full rare;
 No delicate hand must that weapon bear:
 It fell with a din made the warder aware
 Of such warrior's prowess to have a care.

Loud thundered the mace—the door fell supine:—
 "Well aimed was that blow," said the warrior, "of mine!
 Now to the bower of the fair Celestine;—
 This feat has well earned her beauties divine;
 And, maiden, I'm come to revel in thine!
 Shall such charms in a gloomy tower decline,
 When thou may'st be led to the bridal shrine
 By the bravest chieftain in Palestine?"

The warrior he entered—the warder essayed
 To stop his proceedings—he sighed—and he prayed;
 But in vain his appeal and petition he made;
 The Knight, so undaunted, could never be stayed
 By even the words that a foeman had said;
 And his heart was now full of the beautiful maid
 Whom Nature with every charm had arrayed;—
 So he turned from the warder, nothing dismayed.

But as he was going to seek the tower
 Where he knew Celestine slept in bower,
 (For now 'twas already midnight hour)
 A stately form, with an arm of power,
 Seized on the Knight, whose brow 'gan lower,
 And his eyes the fire of wrath to shower;
 But the other exclaimed, "Thou well may'st cower,
 For thou ne'er shalt possess so lovely a flower.

"This day," he continued, "the Moslem in vain
 His crescent against our red cross did sustain,
 And here I was sent these towers to maintain,
 Should the Saracen Soldan rally again.
 Wilt thou then arrive to disturb my reign,
 And seek for my daughter, whom never a stain
 Has sullied, to give me, her father, pain?
 For she is betrothed to Sir Alberic Fayne."

"— Little reck I for the happy one,
 Nor thee, the governor of Ascalon,
 Sent by the king when the siege was done,
 And these walls by Richard's arms were won:—
 But I will leave thee till morning's sun
 To illumine our hemisphere has begun;
 And then, ere his mid-day course be run,
 Will I combat with that ephemeron."

"— Sir Alberic Fayne will never fly,
 Though thou art so stalwart an enemy;"
 ("Twas thus the governor gave reply:)
 "But to-morrow's morn, if thou wilt try
 The joust to decide your rivalry,
 I swear by the Virgin, who rules on high,
 That Celestine herself, with her beauteous eye,
 Shall glance on the conqueror's victory."

The morning 's dawned, and the sun has lent
 His rays to enliven the tournament;
 Then, with their eyes on each other bent,
 And harnessed in steel with gilding blent,
 Both the knights to their stations went,
 And stood each before his own fair tent,
 Till the signal bugle its warning sent,
 When they charged, ere its latest sounds were spent.

Like falcon swift on an airy wing,
 They met with echoes thundering:—
 Their steeds the dust around them fling,
 And the crowds, with voices murmuring,
 Said they never had seen such chivalrous thing;
 For the lances broke at the sudden spring,
 And Sir Alberic Fayne lay in the ring—
 His victor was Richard himself—the King!

The vanquished was raised from his state supine,
 When Richard addressed the fair Celestine:—
 "Never, too dear one, shalt thou be mine—
 On him let your glances only shine;

He's worthy, I ween, of such bliss divine,
 Since I, the victor of Palestine,
 Forgetting the rank of thee and thine,
 Were fain to have robbed thy virgin shrine.

"Thy father will tell thee, I came in the night,
 Like a robber who shuns the glare of day-light;
 I came like a south wind on blossoms bright,
 Fraught with intention to ravish and blight :—
 But now, though I've conquered thine own true knight,
 Though I love thee, sweet maiden, as much as man might,
 Still justice directs my heart aright,
 And to-morrow thy bridal shall speed in our sight."

"Delightful!" cried Mr. Clayton, rising from his chair to imprint a kiss on the chaste brow of Eloise, whom he loved with all the tenderness usually manifested by a father towards a child. The amiable girl expressed the gratification she experienced in having pleased her uncle; and the day passed away more happily than any other since the fatal moment when Alfred was first accused of a dreadful act of turpitude. Mrs. Clayton never demonstrated so much affection, nor showed so many instances of sincere love towards her innocent daughter before: and Eloise was half inclined to throw herself on her mother's bosom, and confess her permanent attachment to De Rosann, as well as the fact of their secret correspondence, when she received the caresses of a parent from whom she now withheld, for the first time in her life, the thoughts and reflections of her secret soul.

But she happily called to mind the injunctions of her uncle; and satisfied her conscience with the conviction of acting under his sanction and auspices. She knew that he would be the last person in the world to mislead her—that his ideas of propriety would not permit him to suffer his niece to violate, in the slightest degree, the strict laws of decorum and female delicacy—and that he merely moderated by his indulgence the harsh decrees of her mother. With these impressions, Eloise calmed her agitated mind, and satisfied all her scruples, determining to follow her uncle's advice in this matter, and her mother's in every other—a compromise at which the most punctilious of our readers cannot express the smallest disapprobation, inasmuch as parental solicitude cannot always discriminate clearly in affairs so particularly connected with a child's present and future happiness.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A DEATH-BED.

"YOUR absence during a whole day is thus explained, M. De Rosann," said Selina.

"And I have now given you a true and faithful account of the affair," returned our hero. "I saw the surgeon, who attends



Dr. Rosamund's explanation to Miss Roberts

Mr. Markham, this morning, and he assured me that his patient was already much better."

"It is fortunate that thirty hours—or thereabout—can have worked such an improvement, being a tolerably convincing proof of the insignificance of the wound."

"'Twas nothing but a mere scratch, Miss Robson," remarked our hero, sitting uneasily on his chair; for he had called to make a certain explanation, which perhaps the reader may recollect he was resolved to do—and not to chatter on indifferent matters. He knew that the peace of mind of a young and pretty girl was at stake; and he hastened to acquit himself of a duty he owed her, her family, and himself. Disagreeable as was the task, it must nevertheless be performed—and with as little delay as possible. Selina herself furnished the opportunity.

"And have you no relatives—no friends, M. De Rosann, whom your death might have plunged into the deepest affliction?" enquired Selina with a shudder, as she contemplated the past possibility of such a lamentable event.

"There is one in the world," answered Alfred, a sigh escaping from his breast, "whose existence is so nearly coupled with mine, that my health and happiness are conditions of her own—that my tears would cause her's to flow in abundance, and my smiles animate even her countenance with radiant joy. This being," continued our hero, not daring to look towards Selina, "is engaged to me by the most solemn and unchangeable vows; her heart is devotedly attached to him whose soul is entirely wrapped up in her. She is an angel of beauty, of chastity, and innocence—a maiden whose pure mind, like your's, Miss Robson, is unacquainted with guile—"

A convulsive sob interrupted this fervent but well-merited panegyric of the charms and the character of Eloise: De Rosann sprung hastily from his chair, and cursed his rashness in thus precipitately entering upon so tender a subject. Selina was white as marble—despair was depicted upon her countenance—not even the gigantic efforts of feminine modesty, reserve, and pride could conceal the violence of her emotions—her bosom heaved convulsively—tears ran down her pale cheeks—her whole frame was suddenly paralysed with a sorrow—with a blow that made her motionless. At length she exerted all her force, recalled the small remnants of her broken courage, and hastily left the room. De Rosann did not offer to detain her: he stood petrified by the chair she had just left, uncertain how to act, undecided what course to pursue.

For five minutes did he thus remain in an attitude of pensiveness and thought, without having resolved upon taking any step to divest himself of the embarrassment of an unpleasant situation. In the midst of his reflections, the door of the apartment opened gently; and Selina again entered the room. Her face had lost nothing of its pallor—a deep melancholy had taken the place of the despairing expression it ere now had worn—and a forced, an unnatural tranquillity—a terrible calmness which made our hero shudder—betrayed the violence she was obliged to do her acutest

feelings and sensibility. As she drew near to the spot where De Rosann was standing, stupified at the remarkable change ten minutes had been sufficient to work in the manners and the aspect of that young lady, she endeavoured to smile; but the attempt was as vain as the essay of a departing sinner to assume a look of placid felicity or fearlessness. Alfred uttered not a word—he was too much shocked at the sad spectacle, to break a silence that appeared solemn and sacred. Selina noticed his embarrassment, and felt it her duty to terminate a scene that had betrayed her secret soul to him whom she tenderly loved.

“M. De Rosann,” said she in a low voice, “you must pardon and forget the events of this morning. It is useless for me to attempt to extenuate my folly by paltry excuses or subterfuges. Were I a child of sixteen or seventeen, I should probably think it incumbent upon me, and only consistent with female delicacy, to deceive you as to the causes of my past emotions. But the age of frivolity has gone by: you have always treated me more as the sensible woman, than the vain and coquettish girl: it is in the former light that I desire to be now regarded, and that I mean to express my sentiment. Listen for five minutes—I shall not detain you long—and then let us drop a veil over the occurrences of this morning, henceforth and for ever!”

“O! Selina—Miss Robson—have I then been the innocent cause of filling your heart with sorrow!” exclaimed our hero, tears running down his cheeks, for he could not contemplate the marble features of that once happy girl without emotion.

“Nay—Alfred—do not reproach yourself. I am alone to blame—and this confession of my weakness shall be my punishment. I have loved you, M. De Rosann—loved you from the first moment we met. Till I saw you, my heart had never known that passion—and at first I was unaware of its presence, still less of its ravages. I loved you—and a thousand innocent familiarities, which your position, as an intimate friend to the family, allowed you to practise, were foolishly perverted by my disordered imagination into proofs of a reciprocal regard. Did you press my hand by accident—did you call me by my Christian name in a moment of mirth—I immediately fancied your forgetfulness or absence to be signs of a tenderness mutually felt. ’Twas thus I deluded myself—’twas thus I nourished a flame to consume me—to devour my poor heart—to destroy my peace—to rob me of rest—to plant thorns in my path: and it is here, here,” she added, placing her hand upon her breast, “that the serpent gnaws—that the flame burns—and that the unseen worm preys upon my vitals!”

“Selina—O Selina! am I the cause of this?”

“Yes—but unintentionally so: and when once I shall have unburthened my mind to you, De Rosann, I shall experience a certain peace—a repose which my lacerated heart requires. In all this I can attach no blame to you—’tis my own perverse destiny that has thus taught me to experience the miseries as well as the joys of life. Do you think that my journey, from my birth to my grave, is to pass amidst gay and smiling prospects? Oh! no— I

am not more fortunate than the rest of mankind! Deep as the impression now is—great as are the ravages that my luckless affection has made upon my mind, even in a period of three short weeks—time, and time only, will moderate the pain, if it cannot altogether eradicate the sting. And do not imagine that your presence will afflict me for the future: as long as you remain in this city, call upon us as usual, and we will be friends instead of—”

“Generous girl!” exclaimed De Rosann: “Eloise could not be jealous of one whose disposition is so noble!”

“My ridiculous passion demanded a severe punishment,” continued Selina: “and the awkwardness of my situation in being thus obliged to make an avowal which lacerates my heart, wounds my pride, and revolts against the purity of my sentiments, is an ample penalty for the levity of my conduct. You are a man of honour—you are upright and noble in your disposition—you have heard my sad confession—and you will not publish my secret to the world. Let it remain in two memories only—let us each carry it to the tomb. And when you lead your destined bride to the altar, recollect, De Rosann, that there is one in the world who gives you her blessing, and who will offer up prayers for your future happiness. My heart is now relieved of a heavy load—I feel calmer than I have done for some days past—my feelings are less acute—my mind is less agitated. And now let me conclude with a prayer that you will not think the worse of me, for having been obliged to explain my emotions, and to unveil the secrets of my soul.”

“Think the worse of you, Miss Robson!” ejaculated our hero, astonished at the supposition. “I admire your character, and the mingled delicacy and firmness of your mind, the more I hear you speak, and the more I become acquainted with your thoughts. And, O! pardon the occasional levity, the frequent absence of mind, which have thus imposed upon you; and let me breathe a supplication to you not to imagine that I was wilfully guilty of an action the most cowardly and the most base! Had I never seen Eloise—or had I seen you first, Miss Robson—it might have been different: God only can look into the future—God only can judge of what would have happened;—the evil of to-day is sufficient for us to know.”

“Say no more upon the subject,” cried Selina: “let us give each other a promise of friendship—and I must endeavour to content myself with that chilling appellation of what I feel. From this moment forget the past—and persuade yourself that the adventures of the last hour are a dream—a baseless vision.”

“Farewell for the present,” said De Rosann, anxious to return home to compose the agitation of his mind: “and when next we meet, we encounter each other as friends. Adieu!”

On his return to his hotel, when he entered his sitting-room, he found a note lying upon the table. He hastily opened it, and read as follows:—

“A dying man, who is anxious to make his peace with all his fellow-creatures, ere he quits this world of sin, implores M. De

Rosann to visit him, if it be only for one minute, to smooth the pillow of a death-bed, and pardon the injuries he has received."

The address of the house whither De Rosann was thus invited, appeared at the bottom of this gloomy epistle; and our hero did not hesitate two minutes how to act. He hastily left the hotel, and hurried to the mansion where his presence appeared so necessary. The moment he mentioned his name, a servant in a handsome livery showed him to an apartment magnificently furnished, and desired him to have the kindness to wait for five minutes, in order that the sick man might be prepared to receive his visitor. Our hero obeyed; and although a secret presentiment told him who had sent for him, he was still anxious to be relieved of suspense. Presently the domestic returned, and requested De Rosann to follow him. They ascended a wide stair-case, and passed up a long gallery that led to the invalid's chamber. Alfred entered; and the servant closed the door upon him.

"Is that you, De Rosann?" said a feeble voice, which our hero, as he had expected, recognised to be La Motte's; "and have you obeyed my summons, and condescended to visit the repentant sinner's death-bed? Oh! how thankful—how deeply grateful I am!"

"La Motte," returned Alfred, in a solemn tone, "do not imagine that I have come to reproach—I am here to pardon you!"

"Is it possible, De Rosann, that you can forget the deep injuries I have done you?—your reputation tarnished—your establishment ruined—your fortune dissipated—yourself accused and condemned as a forger—"

"Ah! how did you become aware of that?" interrupted Alfred, suddenly.

"Four or five days ago, I met an individual whom I had once known in Paris—a person of the name of Belle-Rose—and he entrusted me with that which he called a great secret: he narrated to me all the ignominy you had suffered on my account. But he did not reveal the sad tidings till I had sworn that you and I were not friends, that the fact should never escape my lips in England, and that there was no chance of our ever conversing together.

"He did right," cried De Rosann.

"A sudden malady has seized upon me," said La Motte, "and will soon extinguish the vital spark with its vengeful breath. I feel that a just God is punishing me for my crimes. Alas! perhaps the agonies I now endure are only a foretaste of those I am destined to undergo in the regions where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!"

"Console yourself, La Motte," whispered Alfred, in a kind tone; for he forgot at that awful moment all he had undergone through the treachery of the dying man.

"Say that you pardon me!" implored La Motte, large drops of perspiration falling from his forehead, and mingling with the repentant tears which he shed. "Say that you pardon me—and I may yet die in peace and comparative contentment."

"I pardon you from the bottom of my heart; I forget all—ah, you have made me suffer; I offer you the hand of friendship," cried the generous youth, grasping the emaciated fingers held out to him, "and I swear, as God is my judge, that I sincerely forgive you La Motte—oh! as sincerely as man can do."

"In my death I shall be more serviceable to you than I was in my lifetime, De Rosann," said La Motte, vainly endeavouring to stifle the convulsive sobs that nearly choked him, and that perpetually interrupted his conversation: "I have at length done you the justice I owe you. Since the fatal moment of my crime, I have scarcely known happiness, otherwise than as an empty name. My affectionate wife, who never suspected my guilt,—and in order to conceal it from her, I carefully avoided any correspondence with the continent, not even suffering a French journal to enter my house,—that devoted woman fell a victim to the change of climate which my vices obliged her to endure, and left me alone in the world a few weeks after our arrival in England. Nor did my ill-gotten wealth profit me. It gradually disappeared in unfortunate speculations; and, as if I had not already suffered enough by my misdeeds, I was about to inveigle the worthy Mr. Robson to place his property in my power. You saved him from the precipice on which he stood. I left his house in shame and confusion; and, assembling the wreck of my riches, I entered into a bold speculation the very next day, determined to lose all and deprive myself of life, or by a desperate stroke to realize in eight-and-forty hours an immense sum, with which I might live happily in another clime. The foreign mail arrived—the funds rose to the astonishment of every body—and I hailed my success with unbounded joy. I then relinquished my idea of quitting the country, and thought of settling in a distant part of England, and thus avoiding the possibility of encountering men whose reproaches I had every reason to dread—I mean Robson and yourself. But the spirit of a gambler kept me in London; and I still pursued my desperate system of speculation, but with an unparalleled fortune. I was astonished at my own prosperity, and saw myself in a few days the possessor of more money than I had ever had at my disposal during an adventurous life. The excitement my mind had undergone threw me upon a sick bed, and other maladies have crowded fast upon me to rob me of existence."

La Motte paused for a few moments, wiped his forehead, and continued in a feebler voice to the following effect:—

"I feel that my last hour is approaching, and that the green sod will soon close over my coffin: perhaps there is not a soul in the world to drop a tear upon my tomb! This morning I sent for a lawyer and competent witnesses, and made my will. The contents of it, De Rosann, will prove that I deeply deplore my treachery towards you, and that on my death-bed I endeavour to make amends. You need not be afraid to accept the trifle I have left you,—it was honestly gained by my speculations on the Exchange. I have, moreover, drawn up a full and clear statement of the transaction by which your fair fame suffered. This has been

signed by the French consul: the two documents will be found together after my death. Till then neither shall be opened. Suffice it to say, that your innocence will be fully established—and you may yet look your enemies in the face.”

“God knows, my motives in pardoning your offences towards me were not interested, La Motte,” cried De Rosann: “but I do not refuse the bounteous gifts you may have bequeathed me—because I am poor—I am a beggar, indeed—dependent on my friends.”

“And I have reduced you to so humiliating a predicament!” cried La Motte, covering his face with his hands, and weeping bitterly. “I have been the baneful cause of all your bitter tears—your moments of agony—your nights of torment—and your days of despair. Through my infernal machinations—but thought is dreadful—I dare not look at the past—retrospection is terrible! Oh! De Rosann—De Rosann—at length you are avenged—for you witness my tortures. Oh! oh!”

“I do not wish for vengeance,” said our hero, mildly.

“I know it, De Rosann—you have pardoned me! But I can not yet pardon myself.”

The surgeon now entered the room, and proceeded to examine his patient's pulse. The fever was considerably increased by the excitement of the last half hour; and an almost involuntary shake of the head, on the part of the medical man, convinced De Rosann that La Motte had but a short time to live. In the evening he rallied a little, and a hectic colour appeared on his cheeks; but towards midnight he suffered a relapse; and at two o'clock on the following morning he expired in the arms of the individual whom he had only a year ago ruined and reduced to the lowest pitch of degradation.

When La Motte's will was opened, De Rosann found himself the sudden heir to upwards of forty thousand pounds. He moreover inherited the possession of the furniture, valuables, carriages, horses, &c. In addition to these bequests, the sum of twelve thousand pounds was left to liquidate the amounts due to those discounters who had given cash upon the forged bills for which De Rosann suffered, in case their claims had not been already satisfied: and if they had received a portion, or the whole, of the money that was owing to them, from the product of the establishment when it became bankrupt, and was sold to other merchants, then the remainder, or entire sum of twelve thousand pounds, was to devolve to De Rosann as La Motte's heir. Fortunately for our hero, the sale of his ruined house had been entrusted to honest men; and subsequent enquiry proved that the creditors had been paid various dividends to the gross amount of seventy-five per cent. Nine thousand pounds of the twelve, thus equitably set apart by the repentant La Motte, were added to the other legacies; and no one congratulated De Rosann more sincerely on his unexpected good fortune than the worthy banker, and his daughter Selina.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE DEPARTURE.

IN the same desk, which had contained the will of the penitent La Motte, was a sealed document addressed to De Rosann. This was the statement of the departed man relative to the circumstances attending the forgery, duly witnessed by two respectable housekeepers and by the French consul. De Rosann gladly possessed himself of this important deed, the contents of which he did not communicate even to Mr. Robson, for motives which scarcely require explanation. With Mrs. Clayton alone would the confession of La Motte's crimes be chiefly availing; and Alfred anticipated the pleasure he should experience when he presented himself before the conscientious mother, and produced the many recommendations he now bore in his favour, amongst which his sudden accession of wealth would not probably be the slightest.

A few days after the performance of the funeral obsequies of the deceased La Motte, our hero was surprised by a visit from Belle-Rose, whose shabby clothes, dirty appearance, and unchanged linen, betokened one of those sudden reverses of fortune to which the adventurer was far from unaccustomed. His hat was nevertheless still inclined to the right side two inches out of the perpendicular; and he endeavoured to make up by the increase of his swagger for the miserable appearance of his person.

"De Rosann—my dear fellow," cried Belle-Rose, throwing himself uninvited upon the sofa, and dirtying one of the cushions with his boot, "I understand you are in luck—a favorite of Madame Fortune—while I am as poor as a peasant of Auvergne. 'Tis true, I could eat up all France and Navarre in six months, if any one would give me the chance. But that does not put guineas into my pocket; and I already owe a tolerable round sum to Markham."

"M. Belle-Rose," said Alfred, firmly, and in a severe tone of voice, "I thought that when we tacitly concluded our agreement—a compact you yourself suggested—"

"That we should remain mortal enemies, eh? Oh! no," interrupted Belle-Rose; "I entertain too sincere an affection for you to continue at warfare. *Peace! Peace!* is my motto, De Rosann. So give me your hand—and a little money in it, if you please; because I am miserably poor."

"For the last time, Belle-Rose, I will accede to your request," cried our hero, unlocking his writing-desk, and taking out some money: "but, remember, that this is absolutely the last time; and that if you call upon me again, I will sooner brave exposure at your hands than satisfy your rapacious demands. There are a hundred pounds at your service; take them, and let me see your face no more."

"Shall I give you my acknowledgment?" enquired Belle-Rose, coolly transferring the bank-notes from the table to his pocket.

"Idiot!" exclaimed Alfred: "do you think I ever wish you to pay me, even if you could?"

"You are perfectly right not to expect it," said the adventurer. "Good morning, my dear De Rosann; and be assured you possess my most undivided friendship."

With these words the *soi-disant* Count left the room; and in the afternoon the respectable inhabitants of the Quadrant were again gratified with the appearance of the little Frenchman, who sported more chains, was dressed in better style, and threw a greater swagger into his gait than ever.

De Rosann received satisfactory letters from St. Malo, and laughed heartily at the contents of Champignon's prospectus; for he instantly recognised the nick-names and real appellations of many of the convicts at the *bagne*, who had made the poor gastronome their butt, and had puffed him up with promises to take shares in his concern. But the happy tidings, that Eloise gradually acquired health and spirits on account of the prospects her lover held out relative to his pardon and speedy return to France, to claim her hand of a parent whose obstacles he declared his ability to overcome, caused our hero to experience sentiments of pleasure and felicity which we cannot define. Those only who have combatted against the cruelty or the pride of parents, and who have met with severe repugnance to the attainment of a consent too long withheld, can appreciate the feelings of a fond lover when he sees fortune suddenly smiling upon him, his mistress tender and constant, and a more than probability of eventually conducting her a blushing bride, resplendent with beauty, animation, and joy, to the hymeneal altar.

Time wore on—about a month since the receipt of Leblond's letter elapsed—and that mysterious individual, faithful to his promise, sent De Rosann the anxiously-anticipated pardon. Our hero tore open the paper that enclosed it; and when his eyes caught the first words, "*Nous, Charles le dix, Roi de France et Navarre, avons ordonné et ordonnons ce qui suit,*" &c. &c.,* and when he noticed the signature of the Minister of Justice at the bottom of the sovereign decree, he could not contain his joy; but with all his native vivacity he performed a thousand ridiculous antics, till he was ashamed of his very self, and began seriously to consider whether he had not lost his senses. The idea that he could now return to his beloved country—that nothing farther detained him in England, and that he was at liberty to commence his journey back again to

"The chosen home of chivalry,
And garden of romance,"

whenever he chose to order the post-chaise and bid adieu to his

* "We, Charles the Tenth, King of France and Navarre, have decreed and do decree that which follows," &c. This is the preamble of all royal mandates in France.

friends—the conviction that he was now no longer a felon, nor a criminal in the eyes of his country's laws, and that the almost insuperable bar to his marriage with Eloise was probably overcome—these reflections caused his heart to leap within him, and he exclaimed aloud, “This moment is an ample reward for all the hours of agony and suffering I have undergone. Pardoned by my king, once more on a level with the proudest of my fellow-countrymen, possessing a competency sufficient to ensure me bread for the future, and then Eloise—oh! indeed—indeed, this instant of bliss is as a drop of wine after cups of vinegar and gall!”

The following morning was fixed for his departure; and he determined to spend the last evening of his sojourn in the English metropolis with the kind friends to whom he was under a multiplicity of obligations. Having first informed Mr. Robson of his intentions, he ascended to the drawing-room, where—as if destiny had arranged the meeting on purpose—he found himself alone with Selina.

“No circumstances can this time make me change my mind, Miss Robson: my presence at St. Malo is absolutely necessary in a few days,” said our hero, when he had gradually unfolded the chief object of his visit to the being whom the sad news afflicted as much as they gave him pleasure.

“May all happiness attend you, M. De Rosann!” cried Selina, wiping away a tear. “May you reap the reward which your constancy deserves, and experience an uninterrupted felicity in the arms of your future bride.”

“And may you forget, Miss Robson, the image of the individual who has been unfortunate enough to cause you pain: may you be united to one capable of appreciating your worth, and of ensuring you that domestic joy which your virtues and your disposition so essentially merit.”

“No, Alfred—M. De Rosann—I shall not seek a change like that to which you allude. My heart can never become the property of another; and where I cannot place my affections, there must I not hope for solace or consolation. 'Twould be a crime to engage in the holy bonds of matrimony—'twould be practising a cheat upon a confiding husband, to return his love with indifference.”

“May you not hope, Selina, that a year—eighteen months—”

“Can change my sentiments?” cried Miss Robson, hastily interrupting our hero, as if he were uttering a blasphemy: “O no, no. Were you better acquainted with my character—my disposition—you would not think so lightly of me as your remark proves you do; but you would pity the undying, the unquenchable flame that gnaws my suffering heart.”

“And yet you yourself said that time could haply work a change for the better,” observed De Rosann, alluding to the fatal day when the memorable explanation took place between himself and the unhappy maiden, whose misplaced affection was a scorpion her bosom had nourished to sting the most vital part.

“If I thought so at the moment, I was wrong: but I probably uttered the words you refer to with the idea of dispelling your fears

for my health and happiness. Since the morning on which I discovered my terrible mistake, we have kept our vows, and have not again touched upon the melancholy topic. You are now going to leave me—you are about to be united to one whom you love—we shall be separated for ever—never more to meet in this world, unless by some strange accident, for it will be my duty to avoid you, on account of your innocent wife, who must naturally experience a certain jealousy of her husband's female friends; and I did not think it a crime once more to unburthen my mind, and assure you of the constant esteem I shall entertain for you, although hundreds of miles may separate us. Do not question my natural delicacy in thus reviving a subject over which the veil of oblivion should have been for ever drawn; but pardon the weakness of a maiden condemned to sigh and to despair."

"My fatal reserve—my want of frankness in the first instance have caused these sufferings; and never shall I cease to reproach my injustice and my folly as the origin of an amiable woman's sorrows."

"If you persist in thus accusing yourself, you will only add to my unhappiness; whereas, did I know that you feel an inward conviction, a secret certainty of your innocence, I should be contented. Promise me, then, M. De Rosann—Alfred—that you will not blame—"

"Not blame myself, Selina!" cried De Rosaun, his heart bleeding at the agony he saw depicted on the countenance of the noble-minded girl: "only name your wishes—tell me to vituperate my conduct—or to accuse no one—to consider all unoffending—and I will obey you!"

"Accuse no one, then," said Selina, repeating De Rosann's words: "and forget that we have ever revived the subject—or rather, forget the subject itself: henceforth be it no more a reminiscence to which you can even refer, so that the thought may cause you neither pain nor remorse."

The entrance of Mrs. Robson and Mary put an end to the embarrassment of De Rosann and the melancholy disclosures of Selina. When the banker's wife was informed of Alfred's speedy departure, and of the very next morning being fixed upon as the day, she could scarcely conceal an expression of sorrow or disappointment; for she had fondly anticipated, that "the handsome young Frenchman would have proposed to her younger daughter;" and since he had succeeded to the wealth of the late La Motte, she had been particularly anxious to retain him in her family as a son-in-law. But the worthy lady was doomed to see her *Chateaux en Espagne* levelled in an instant.

When Mr. Robson entered the room, his disappointed spouse drew him aside, and whispered in his ear, "So M. De Rosann is decided on leaving London to-morrow morning?"

"Yes, my love."

"And he has not proposed to Selina," continued the good lady.

"No, my love."

"Do you not think it rather strange?" enquired Mrs. Robson.

“Not at all, my love.”

“I wish you would not *love* me quite so much, Mr. Robson; but give yourself the trouble to be a little more explicit.”

“On what subject?” demanded the banker calmly.

“Relative to M. De Rosann’s conduct,” returned Mrs. Robson.

“What has he done?”

“What has he not done? you mean. After all his flirtation with Selina—after all his marked attention to her—and after all the kindness he has experienced at this house, he has not proposed, and he purposes leaving to-morrow morning.”

“Now I can be explicit, my dear,” said Mr. Robson with the same provoking calmness, which added to his wife’s irritation. “M. De Rosann, as you told me yourself, danced twice with Selina at the house of our friends the Wentworths—that was not flirtation. M. De Rosann has paid more attention to Selina than to Mary, or any other lady whom he may have met here, because she understands French, and because he cannot speak two words of English—that is not marked attention. And with regard to the kindness we have had it in our power to shew him, a few dinners, &c., &c. are not a very considerable return for the service he rendered your husband, Mrs. Robson, in putting an end to that husband’s speculative views with regard to Lebrun or La Motte. Therefore, in every point you are entirely refuted; and allow me to request you not only to forget these silly notions of your’s, but also to pay my friend M. De Rosann the usual attention he has been accustomed to receive at my table.”

These words were spoken with a firmness that exhibited a determination on Mr. Robson’s part to be obeyed; and the discomfited lady returned to the drawing-room in any thing rather than a good humour.

The evening passed away gloomily and sadly. Selina spoke but little—the banker himself was out of spirits—and Alfred felt an oppression for which he could not account. Mary was sorry to lose “so handsome a *chaperon*” to their morning promenades, as De Rosann—and her mother could not conceal her ill temper at the disappointment she had experienced. At length the clock struck eleven—and our hero rose to depart. He took his leave of the excellent Mr. Robson with unfeigned regret, he thanked him and Mrs. Robson for all their kindness toward him, and promised to write as soon as he should have arrived at Paris. He then bade adieu to Mary more with politeness than regret—and turned to Selina. Her cheek was death-like pale, but no tears dimmed her eyes—her countenance wore rather the expression of despair than of melancholy. He took her trembling hand, and wished her all happiness—she endeavoured to reply—her tongue clave to the roof of her mouth—and her emotions were visible to all present. That instant revealed her secret—the quick glance of her parents and sister detected her unrequited love, and marked her looks, in which was depicted an intensity of agony. “Farewell!” cried De Rosann once more: an almost inaudible “Adieu!” was returned—he relinquished the burning hand that was clasped in his, and

rushed out of the room, glad to escape the severe necessity of beholding Selina's woe, of which he himself was the innocent cause.

De Rosann had ordered the post-chaise to be ready at ten o'clock on the following morning. He packed up his various papers with the most particular attention, arranged every thing ready for his departure, and lay down to rest—but not to sleep. At one moment the image of Selina haunted his fancy; and at another the anticipated happiness he promised himself on his arrival at St. Malo, drove away all inclination to slumber. It was not till nearly daylight that he closed his eyes in forgetfulness of his present good fortune and his past miseries; perhaps even then they followed him in his dreams.

When he awoke, he found a waiter of the hotel standing by his bed-side with a letter in his hands. Our hero hastily tore it open; he recognised the hand-writing of Leblond, and as speedily perused its contents, which obliged him to counter-order the post-chaise for a few hours. Leblond's epistle was short, and neither welcome nor disagreeable. It merely stated, that as De Rosann would doubtless quit London immediately, even if he had not already left, he might call at a certain mercantile house in the city, and take charge of a considerable sum of money, in bills of exchange and cheques upon Paris, which Leblond gave him authority to receive. This sum was doubtless destined for the service of those invisible powers whose intrigues extended even to a foreign land; and De Rosann did not hesitate a moment what course to pursue. Leblond declared he should have mentioned the circumstance in his letter which accompanied the king's pardon, and which Alfred had received the day before, had it not slipped his memory as he wrote in a hurry. He concluded by desiring our hero not to linger more than possible on his journey to Paris, and to call at the *Rue de la Chanoinesse* the moment he arrived in that city.

De Rosann threw the letter upon the table near the bed, and hastily performed his toilet, in order to lose no time ere he started for Southampton, whence it was his intention to embark on board a steam-vessel bound to Havre. He threw himself into a hackney-coach, and desired the driver to take him to an address, that he named, in the city. The obsequious Jarvey whipped his two miserable animals, which he was pleased to dignify by the title of *horses*, and the vehicle flew along the Strand at a quicker rate than ordinarily distinguishes carriages of the kind. And here we may observe, *en passant*, that if the English hackney-coachmen and omnibus-cads were only one quarter as civil as the individuals who fill similar distinguished situations in France, the magistrates of Bow-street, Hatton-garden, &c., would leave the official benches half an hour earlier every day, to their especial contentment, and to the annoyance of the proprietors of *Bell's Life in London* and the *Weekly Dispatch*, the columns of which journals are invariably filled with police-reports wherein the myrmidons of Shillibeer generally figure to advantage.

On account of certain formalities to be filled up, and certain

unavoidable delays, upon which it is not our intention to dwell, De Rosann could not receive the money until four o'clock in the afternoon, when he was obliged to proceed to the city a second time to fetch it and sign a receipt. But in the interval between his two visits, we must notice that a gentleman honoured our hero with a call, and, not finding him at home, took the trouble to wait at least a quarter of an hour, expecting his return. De Rosann questioned the waiter as to the age, dress, and principal characteristics of the person who had exhibited such uncommon politeness, and found, by the answers he received to his enquiries, that the individual in question could have been no other than Belle-Rose. The waiter, moreover, added, that the visitor appeared astonished when he was informed of De Rosann's intended departure. Our hero concluded that his former companion was once more pushed for a little ready money, and he made all possible haste to leave the hotel before the self-styled Count might take it into his head to call again. But despite of all his dispatch, it was past seven o'clock in the evening before he ascended the steps of the post-chaise that was to bear him away from London.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE JOURNEY.

It was ten o'clock before De Rosann arrived at Bagshot. The night was stormy and tempestuous; the wind howled fearfully along the dismal road which runs across the heath; the rain pattered against the windows of the post-chaise with the force of hail-stones; the moon was concealed by dense clouds; not a star appeared upon the face of heaven; all was dark and sombre. When the blast blew violently, it resembled the rush of a mighty torrent; and when its vigour relaxed at intervals, it seemed like the agonizing groans of a human being ere his life be rendered up to the ferocity of the murderer. The lamps of the carriage threw but a partial and glimmering light a few paces in front: the thunder rolled occasionally over-head with awful din; and the lightning, from time to time, broke upon the obscurity of nature in vivid flashes, as evanescent as they were bright. Still De Rosann did not repent having left London during such weather: he was anxious to return to his native land, and ascertain the fate that awaited him, according to the decision which Eloise's mother should pronounce, and which he had every reason to hope would be favourable.

At Bagshot, De Rosann opened the window of the post-chaise for a moment, and called the postillion to the door. He did not attempt to make him understand his meaning by mere words, because, of all people in the world, an English post-boy is about the last whom a rational being would expect to speak French: but money has a persuasive eloquence peculiar to itself; and an extra half-crown, paid before-hand, on this occasion produced the desired

effect. Our hero saw that his wishes were comprehended; and, having drawn up the blinds, he endeavoured to compose himself to sleep, while the postillion whipped his spirited horses, and urged them to such a pace that Alfred could not reproach himself for having expended coin in vain.

Immediately out of Bagshot, which lies in a valley, the road ascends a steep hill. Up this acclivity dashed the chaise drawn by two animals, on whose tender sides the spur and the lash were not used fruitlessly. The brow was passed; and the descent was made at the same rapid rate, as if life were unrecked for, and speed alone regarded. Alfred felt a momentary alarm at so extraordinary a celerity; but he did not choose to exhibit his nervous fears by desiring the postilion to relax from that pace which he himself had encouraged with his munificence. The level piece of ground to which they had now arrived, a mile before the entrance of the town of Blackwater, was scarcely touched by the hoofs of the horses as they galloped over it like grey-hounds stretching across the plain, bearing the carriage in their rear as if it were a thing of no weight. In the mean time the flashes of lightning gradually became more frequent and more vivid; the thunder broke forth with deafening peals; the violence of the rain increased; and the murmuring of the wind as rapidly abated to a comparative tranquillity. Faster and faster flew the mettled steeds—their iron-shod heels struck fire even on a road deluged with water—but the crack of the postillion's whip was heard no longer. Trusting too confidently to the vigour of his arm, and to the supposed command he had over his horses, he had given the high-spirited animals a larger scope than they were accustomed to enjoy—their loosened bridles had relaxed the galling of the bit—and the lightning terrified them by its repeated glare.

When too late, the postillion discovered his imprudence. The horses obeyed his voice as much as the ocean regards the charm of the Norwegian mariner, who whistles to reduce it to silence and to calmness. De Rosann soon perceived the effect of his inauspicious liberality, and did not then hesitate to call to the postillion to arrest the progress of the flying animals. His shouts only terrified them the more, and increased their speed. The carriage traced an uneven passage along the road—it oscillated from side to side with dreadful jerks—and occasionally threatened to overturn, as one wheel sunk deeply into the mud, and the other passed upon a heap of stones. De Rosann was jolted, first to the right and then to the left; the windows rattled as if they would break; and the chain, to which the skid was attached, clanked backwards and forwards to increase the discordant clamour.

The town of Blackwater was traversed with the rapidity of the flight of an arrow shot from the bow by the arm of a strong archer: the pavement echoed a moment to the hoofs of the horses, and the sound was lost upon the murmuring blast as though it had not been. It was then the spirited animals relaxed their ardour, and gradually reduced their pace to one of less celerity. There is, on the farther side from London of Blackwater, a high hill immediately before

the road opens upon the wide common called Harford Flats. This ascent was made with a still decreasing speed, and when the vehicle arrived at the summit, the horses, beaten by their own exertions, spontaneously stopped to recover breath. Alfred was about to reproach the post-boy for his rashness in thus suffering himself to be mastered by steeds whose mettle was not to be idly tampered with : but he checked himself in time to recollect that the vituperation he meditated would not come within the limits of that individual's comprehension. He however caused the door to be opened, and descended to examine the chaise, in order to ascertain if the linch-pins were in their places, and if the wheels had experienced any damage.

While he was thus engaged, the distant sounds of horses' hoofs met his ears ; and in the course of a minute three men, mounted on "stalworth chargers," galloped up to the spot where the post-chaise was standing. Instead of passing by, they suddenly halted, and, with one accord, leaped to the ground. Alfred started from the stooping posture in which he was bent towards the box of one of the wheels, the moment he heard that simultaneous movement on the part of the strangers ; and a suspicion of their design instantly flashed across his mind. He made a rush toward the door of the chaise, in order to seize his pistols ; but, as if his aim were anticipated, the foremost of the three robbers threw himself between our hero and the carriage, while a second pinioned his arms behind him. The third ran forward to secure the postillion ; he, however, searched in vain ; that wary individual had slipped away the instant he perceived the vile intentions of the three travellers.

De Rosann made a desperate effort to disengage himself from the vigorous grasp that had assailed him ; and, by a turn more dexterous than powerful, he once more regained the freedom of his arms. To dash aside the man who had intervened between himself and the carriage, was the work of an instant, and the robber fell so heavily against one of the wheels, that he rolled senseless to the ground, apparently stunned by the sudden blow. Our hero's pistols were on the seat of the carriage ; the door was open, and the step was down. He leapt lightly up, and succeeded in securing the loaded weapons, ere he was again attacked. All this was the work of a second : but before he had time to turn and confront his enemies, he was tripped up from behind, and levelled with the ground as he attempted to descend from the first step of the carriage whereon he had mounted to reach his pistols, one of which exploded as he fell.

No sooner was De Rosann thus powerless on the muddy road, than one of the two robbers who remained capable of acting—for the other was still senseless—leaped upon our hero to prevent him from rising, and presented a large clasp-knife to the back of his neck, touching the skin with the point, and instantly withdrawing it, not from motives of cruelty, but merely to show the vicinity of the murderous weapon. The companion of the man thus employed in acting as sentry over De Rosann, proceeded to examine the carriage, and, for that purpose, he detached one of the lanterns

hanging in front. No sooner did the lamp move from its place, than Alfred felt himself suddenly relieved of the load from his back, and, starting up, he ascertained, by the glimmering rays of light, that the robber who had kept him down was struggling in the vigorous grasp of the postillion. De Rosann lost not a minute, but rushed upon the remaining highway-man who was about to commence his examination of the carriage, and levelled him to the ground with a blow of the pistol which had exploded. He then relieved the postillion of his charge, by tying the robber's arms and legs with some cordage he hastily cut from one of his trunks, and, rolling him into a dry ditch at the side of the road whither the post-boy had at first retired for refuge, and whence he had emerged when a favourable opportunity of putting an end to the combat presented itself. That opportunity was discovered by the rays of the lantern which was detached from its place to aid the thief in the investigation of the baggage, as detailed above.

Our hero was about to jump into the chaise and continue his journey, when one of the robbers, that lay stretched upon the road, gave a loud groan. De Rosann seized the lantern from the hands of the postillion, who was going to restore it to its place, and drew near to assist the sufferer. The exclamation issued from the individual De Rosann had thrown against the wheel. When the rays of the feeble light fell upon the pale countenance of the fallen man, Alfred uttered a cry of surprise and horror—for he recognised the features of his ancient antagonist Markham!

A sudden idea struck the mind of our hero. Belle-Rose had called upon him in the morning, and had remained a quarter of an hour in the room he occupied at the hotel, where Leblond's letter was lying open upon the table. No sooner did De Rosann recall these circumstances to his memory, than he ran to the second robber, who lay senseless upon the ground, approached the lamp to his face, and, as he had anticipated, discovered his former companion Belle-Rose! He did not stay to trouble himself about the third—but, horror-stricken at the dreadful events which had just happened, and trembling for the future fate of his miserable fellow-countryman, he leapt into the carriage, and was soon far away from the spot where the combat had taken place. He did not forget to thank the Almighty that no blood had been spilt, and that he had so narrowly escaped being despoiled of his most valuable possessions.

“Had the miserable wretches succeeded in this vile attempt,” said De Rosann to himself, as the post-chaise rolled onward, “I should have been undone for ever. The treasure with which I am entrusted would be now in their possession; and my tale would stand but a poor chance of pacifying the owners of those riches on my arrival at Paris. But fortune is wearied of tormenting me; and has doubtless turned her capricious resentment against other unhappy beings, who at this moment are deploring her harshness. And to such a degraded abyss of infamy is Belle-Rose reduced! He, that only a few weeks ago was proud of his comparative guiltlessness when put in competition with the turpitude of other men,



The Struggle

—he, that boasted of never having been obliged to plunder the nightly traveller, and that despised the adventurous high-wayman and assassin—he is fallen to a level with the vilest of robbers and miscreants. O what a change can a short period work in the minds and pursuits of human beings! And, alas! what charms can temptation assume, what alluring habits hold out? It is too late—or I would still endeavour to snatch the unfortunate votary of dissipation and debauchery, from the precipice on which he stands, and procure him an honourable employment. But it is useless!”

De Rosann arrived at Southampton without any other adventure worth relating, and was not a little grieved when he found that the captain of the steam-vessel did not dare put out to sea, on account of the inclemency of the weather. Our hero was therefore constrained to wait three or four days in a town where he was a perfect stranger; and solace himself as well as he was able with the contents of an old French romance which he picked up at a circulating library.

On the morning of the fifth day the wind had so much abated, that De Rosann was enabled to embark. After a tolerable passage, during which he was nevertheless a sad victim to that dreadful but transitory malady—sea-sickness, he landed in safety at Havre, and immediately hired a carriage to take him to St. Malo.

His heart leapt within him as he once more breathed the air of his native France,—the land of his forefathers; and he felt proud of being again recognised by his government as a free citizen of the country that had produced whole armies of heroes to adorn with undying names the pages of history. There is not a nation in the world more patriotic than the French. The English mistake their own common national prejudices and bigotted adoration of institutions they scarcely comprehend, for a true patriotism; whereas pride alone is the origin of their blind love. A Frenchman understands his own feelings better; he never asserts “that all is perfect” on his native soil; he will fight for it—he will praise it—and at the same time he will confess the perfections or admit the superiority of certain laws, habits, or systems, prevalent or existing in other climes. The Frenchman argues with warmth, energy, and action; but he does not forget the rules of logic, or the dictates of reason: the Englishman contents himself by saying “It is so,” because he knows it—” and fancies he has destroyed the whole fabric of controversy erected by his opponent.

While the horses were being harnessed to the carriage, De Rosann amused himself with a Paris daily paper that was lying upon the table in the coffee-room of the inn. It was the *Constitutionnel* over which he thus accidentally cast his eyes; and an article, wherein this celebrated journal* endeavoured to refute the assertions of an opposition contemporary, immediately rivetted our hero’s attention to the subject. Subtle and plausible as were the arguments made use of by the *Constitutionnel*, the severe truths it attempted to contradict were but too palpable to the meanest capacity. The oppo-

* A year after the establishment of the *Constitutionnel*, its circulation amounted to the almost incredible number of twenty-eight thousand per diem. At the present moment, it is scarcely twelve.

sition paper totally exposed the rash measures practised by the existing ministry, and hinted broadly at the probable result. It was evident, according to the exposure thus made of many of the impolitic schemes of Polignac and his associates in office, that the throne of the royal Bourbons was tottering, that the cry of an enslaved nation would shortly alarm the imprudent Charles in his palace at St. Cloud, and that the public feeling was labouring under a strong excitement. De Rosann sighed when he reflected how another popular tumult might again prepare consular seats for new Robespierres, Dantons, and a host of petty tyrants—he feared lest, the head of the hydra being cut off, a multiplicity of others might spring up in its place—but he acknowledged within himself that France could not submit her proud head to an unworthy yoke, and that her sons must be free!

Our hero's reflections were interrupted by the entrance of the hostler, who informed him that the post-chaise was in readiness, and was waiting for him. De Rosann forgot the *Constitutionnel*, Polignac, Peyronnet, and the probable crisis that was at hand, and instantly obeyed the welcome summons—for his anxiety to embrace his beloved Éloise may naturally be imagined. And if our reader have ever been placed in a similar situation, let him call to mind his own feelings, and judge by them of the mingled hope and fear—expectation and alarm—which Alfred felt when the wheels of the carriage rolled upon the pavement of St. Malo. He desired the postillion to conduct him to the hotel he and Belle-Rose had patronised the last time he visited that sea-port, and soon descended in the court-yard of the inn amidst the salutations of landlord, waiter, and chamber-maid.

“Apparently *Monsieur* has not irretrievably forgotten us,” said the host, as he assisted De Rosann to alight. “I recollected the extraordinarily handsome features of *Monsieur* instantaneously the carriage stopped at our gate; and I unfeignedly hope *Monsieur* has satisfactorily performed his arduously undertaken and suddenly resolved-upon journey to England.”

“Thank you—thank you!” cried our hero by way of answer to the jargon of the landlord. “Hasten and cut the cords of those trunks—I must see them conveyed to my bed-chamber before I leave.”

“Leave!” exclaimed the *maitre d’hotel*. “Indubitably *Monsieur* must immediately partake of some speedily prepared refreshment.”

“No—in an hour or two—for God’s sake, use despatch with that baggage—I have a call to make first,” replied De Rosann, vainly endeavouring to escape from fresh importunities.

“A call to make!” persisted the landlord in a strain that would have wearied the patience of even a Job or a martyr: “that is indisputably a duty on infinitely numerous occasions; but decidedly when a gentleman has necessitatedly passed many wearily tiresome hours in a post-chaise, he should evidently first seriously occupy himself about his dinner.”

“*Parbleu!* arrange it as you like,” cried De Rosann, anxious to avoid a farther discussion with the provoking landlord. “I must

call first on a family—the family of Mrs. Clayton—do you know the name—it is English?”

“So inconceivably short is my memory,” returned the host, “that affairs indispensably —”

“I know the family this gentleman alludes to,” interrupted the porter: “the lady and gentleman, whose daughter died the day before yesterday.”

“Died!” exclaimed Alfred, a cold perspiration running down his forehead. “A young lady of the name of Clayton?”

“Yes—Playton—that is the name,” rejoined the porter.

“One whom fame loudly reports to have been an extraordinarily renowned actress,” said the landlord. “It is unanswerably proved that she had three illegitimately begotten children—”

“Thank God!” cried De Rosann, relieved from a sudden and terrible fear, while the host and the porter wondered why he should express his gratitude to Providence because the deceased actress had been guilty of a breach of continence and chastity, and had left behind her living proofs of her frailty.

“Yes—God is indubitably to be thanked,” added the obsequious landlord, determined not to differ in opinion with his guest, “for having mercifully taken the life of the young lady, before she rapidly peopled the town with children infamously conceived.”

The trunks were at length lifted from the post-chaise, and carried by De Rosann’s orders to the apartment he was destined to occupy according to the directions of the landlord. Our hero hastily changed his clothes, and performed his toilet; and, having consigned certain documents to his pocket, he sallied forth to call upon his beloved Eloise. The porter of the hotel was soon found to conduct him to the house where he anticipated to hear pronounced the final *fiat* that should stamp his happiness or his misery, and divest him of suspense. But the fears were few, and the hopes were many and sanguine that filled the breast of our hero, as he hurried along the street towards the dwelling he was so anxious to reach.

“Now,” thought he to himself, as he knocked at the door and dismissed the porter back again to the hotel,—“now let me reap a reward for all my past sufferings, or find that I have laboured fruitlessly and in vain!”

CHAPTER XXIX.

UNWELCOME NEWS.

WHEN Belle-Rose came to himself, and partially recovered his senses, he felt a dreadful chill, which had taken possession of his whole body. At first he was at a loss to ascertain where he was; but as his scattered ideas gradually concentrated and furnished his memory with the power of reflection, he called to mind all that had passed; and instead of repenting of the daring deed he had contemplated, he vented his indignation in curses against its failure. The night was pitch dark—the rain still fell in torrents—

the wind alone had abated in violence. A sudden flash of lightning enabled him to judge the result of the combat. The post-chaise had disappeared; one of his comrades lay stretched upon the ground; the other was no where to be seen. But their horses were standing tranquilly in the middle of the road, overcome with terror, and not daring to move from the spot. The joy of Belle-Rose was great when he thus perceived means of escape so near at hand; for he suspected that De Rosann would return with aid to capture himself and his two companions. He therefore sprang upon the back of one of the trembling steeds, and departed at full gallop towards London, heedless of the cries which escaped from the unfortunate wretch whom De Rosann had bound hand and foot and cast into the dry ditch, and who set up a most plaintive yell when he heard Belle-Rose rise from the ground and mutter audible curses on account of the unsuccessful enterprise that thus had allured him from a warm bed, and exposed his person to the inclemency of the weather.

At about four o'clock in the morning, the self-styled Count entered the metropolis, and returned to the hotel at which he resided. His clothes were covered with mud; his face was disfigured with scratches and bruises acquired during his scuffle with the postillion, and his appearance altogether afforded a sorry spectacle. Luckily the porter who opened the door to him had no light in his hand; and being accustomed to attend such summonses at all hours, he did not make any particular remark. Belle-Rose, too glad to have thus escaped detection, and felicitating himself at having avoided the observation of impertinent curiosity, retired to his chamber, where he soon forgot in the arms of sleep the failure of his nocturnal enterprise.

But when he awoke, at about nine o'clock, an unpleasant reminiscence returned to his memory, and caused him to make a horrible grimace as his eye caught sight of a long slip of paper lying upon the table. The day before—to the uncommon surprise of the adventurer Belle-Rose, who “did not understand such treatment towards a gentleman of rank,” as he expressed himself upon the occasion—the landlord of the hotel had had the impudence, according to his guest’s ideas, to present his bill for the thirteenth time, and request immediate payment. Belle-Rose, who had never thought of liquidating this long-standing account with any of the various monies he had obtained by gambling, by trickery, or at the hands of our hero and Mr. Robson, put off the settlement till the next day; and when the proprietor of the inn protested against a repetition of such idle promises, the *soi-disant* Count kicked him out of the room, and, by the same process, aided him to descend the stairs somewhat quicker than he had mounted them. The host was very indignant at such treatment, and threatened to complain to a police magistrate; but Belle-Rose pacified his wrath, and pledged his honour “as a French nobleman,” that the bill should be duly paid on the following morning.

To procure funds for this purpose, the shameless fellow did not hesitate to call once more upon De Rosann, to solicit that which

he was pleased to dignify by the respectable appellation of *loan* instead of *gift*. Alfred was not however at home; and Belle-Rose resolved to wait for him. He lounged in and out of the two chambers which were occupied by our hero, and which communicated with one another; and at length his eye caught sight of Leblond's letter and Champignon's prospectus. He hastily perused the former, and immediately resolved to essay a daring measure to possess himself of the treasure entrusted to De Rosann. He then glanced hastily on the latter, and laughed heartily at the schemes of the gastronome; for he could not fail to recognise the invention of Champignon's fertile genius, although the prospectus purported to have been put forth by an individual bearing the appellation of Citron, which, as our readers will please to recollect, was the *nom de guerre* adopted by the "best cook in Europe" when he opened his shop at St. Malo.

No sooner had Belle-Rose entertained the nefarious idea of robbing De Rosann on the highway, during a journey which the waiter had already informed the self-dubbed Count our hero projected, than he resolved not to tarry any longer in expectation of Alfred's return, he therefore immediately departed to lay the foundation of the plan. Markham was easily gained over as an accomplice; and another of their abandoned associates was enlisted in the same service. The reader is already acquainted with the failure and result of the scheme.

Scarcely had Belle-Rose completed a hasty toilet, when the landlord entered his room, and requested the fulfilment of the promise so solemnly given the day before.

"You are in a dreadful hurry, my worthy friend," said Belle-Rose, recovering his presence of mind, and speaking with his usual coolness: "cannot you wait till I have called upon my banker—"

"That is the old excuse, M. d'Elsigny," returned the obstinate landlord, evincing a dogged resolution not to be idly made the butt of his guest's disposition for trifling any longer.

"How? the old excuse!" exclaimed Belle-Rose, affecting an angry excitement which he did not feel; "I went out yesterday to fetch the money to liquidate my bill; and falling in with my friend Markham, I entirely forgot it."

"You have broken your word, then; and a man of honour, as you pretend to be, should avoid subjecting himself to an accusation of telling an untruth."

"I have *not* broken my word—nor do I intend to do so," returned Belle-Rose. "The character of the Count d'Elsigny must never be impugned with impunity. I promised to settle your account this morning. Before twelve o'clock the money shall be produced in this very room."

"If I could rely upon your word—"

"Incredulous wretch!" exclaimed Belle-Rose, pretending to get into a passion; "go and draw the money yourself, if you choose."

"I will trust you once more, M. d'Elsigny," cried the landlord, scarcely knowing what step to take, and thinking that his noble

guest could scarcely fail to fulfil a promise so solemnly given for the fourteenth time, particularly when his honour "as a French nobleman" was at stake.

"And you are a great fool for your pains," said Belle-Rose when the proprietor of the hotel had left the room puffed up with hopes as false as they were threadbare.

Belle-Rose rang the bell and ordered his breakfast. He made a hearty meal, and then determined to do that which he had meditated for some time past, and which sooner or later must inevitably have concluded his London career, *viz.* to decamp. In France a Frenchman* can only be arrested upon a bill of exchange, made payable at one town and drawn at another; in England the liberty of the subject was not lately so much regarded by the unsaintly hand of the sheriff's officer. Belle-Rose knew this, and felt convinced that the patience of his landlord was now nearly exhausted; he therefore put the little money he could command in his pocket, made a bundle of a few shirts and other necessities; and enveloping himself in his handsome cloak lined with sables, although the morning was fine and sunny, he sallied forth to seek new adventures, and return to his native land, declaring, as he bent his steps towards the Universal Coach Office in Piccadilly, "That after all, France was the only country fit for a gentleman to reside in!"

While the unsuspecting landlord was anxiously waiting for the return of the *soi-disant* Count, as he had "a sum to make up," the crafty Belle-Rose was comfortably seated on the outside of the Eagle coach, on his way to Dover, where he arrived without any accident the same evening. At six o'clock the next morning he embarked on board a sailing-vessel bound for Calais, the wind being too high and the sea too boisterous to allow the steam-boats to venture the transition. At Calais he caused his passport to be duly signed, according to the usual formalities, and secured a place in the diligence for Abbeville, having already made up his mind how to act in order to obtain a little supply of ready money to commence his career once more at Paris. From Abbeville he proceeded to Dieppe, thence to Havre-de-grace, and lastly to St. Malo. Arrived at this latter town, he did not seek the purchased hospitality of an hotel, but informed himself where dwelt "M. Citron, Friandeur," and hastened to pay his respects to our worthy friend Champignon.

It is impossible for a less able painter than a Hogarth or a Cruikshank to delineate the curious face which the quiet gastronomer put on when Belle-Rose entered his shop. He recollected his visitor's uncommon appetite, and cast a sad look at the dainties so invitingly spread out against the windows each side of the door. But his naturally generous disposition triumphed over that momentary feeling of selfishness, and he welcomed Belle-Rose with a cordiality even astonishing to the impudent and shameless adventurer himself. The fatted calf was immediately killed—the

* A foreigner, not domiciled by act nor naturalized in France, can be arrested for a book-debt; but not upon the mere oath of the creditor, who is obliged to prove the justice of his claim before a writ is granted.

cloth was spread in the neat back parlour—the *cotelettes à la quadrille* were produced to tempt the appetite of the newly-arrived guest—and poor Champignon was amply rewarded in his own idea by the extravagant praises bestowed upon his cookery.

“Here is to your health, my dear Citron,” said Belle-Rose, ‘since such be your name; although, to confess the truth, I admire your original one much more.’”

“A change was absolutely necessary, M. Belle-Rose,” returned the gastronome, as he filled his own and his companion’s glass with marasquino.

“And pray, does your establishment prosper?”

“To my heart’s content. There is not another shop like it in St. Malo, I flatter myself,” answered Champignon.

“Ah! I am glad to hear such excellent news,” cried Belle-Rose. “You know, my dear Cham—Citron, I always entertained a particular friendship for you; and had it not been for my advice, your fingers could never have touched the little bequest you received at the hands of De Rosann.”

“Allow me to return my most sincere thanks,” said Champignon. “And, while I think of our absent acquaintance, let me ask after your friend De Rosann.”

“Yes—he was my friend—my intimate friend, as you say. I left him in London—enjoying himself—this marasquino is excellent—flirting with the girls—another glass, if you please—and carrying on a fine game—you may fill it up to the brim.”

“I am rejoiced at these good tidings,” exclaimed the gastronome, having recourse a third time to the stone bottle in which the racy *liqueur* was contained.

“It was not with the five hundred francs alone that you set up this shop,” said Belle-Rose after a pause, during which he savoured the marasquino as if it were the nectar of the gods.

“Do you not recollect that I had a cousin in St. Malo, to whom I once rendered important pecuniary assistance? I sought his aid and advice, and I found him not only grateful for my bounty towards him, but also willing to serve me. He lent me three thousand francs—procured me unlimited credit—and assisted me to the utmost of his power.”

“You always have a little money in your till, then,” said Belle-Rose.

“Thank God! my business is increasing daily,” replied Champignon; “and I have no reason to complain.”

“If I only had a thousand francs,” cried Belle-Rose, “I should secure a rapid fortune.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed the gastronome: “how so?”

“By making rat-traps,” returned Belle-Rose, affecting a serious air.

“Rat-traps!” ejaculated Champignon, who was very much inclined to laugh. “There are already plenty of rat-traps in France.”

“O yes!—common things—that hold each only one rat,” said Belle-Rose without relaxing from his well-assumed gravity. “I

have obtained a patent in England for my invention of a rat-trap, which is not larger than the stone-bottle you hold in your hand, and which can catch five and twenty rats at a time."

"Wonderful!" shouted Champignon. "Let us drink to the success of the rat-traps," he added, once more filling the glasses.

"And if I had a thousand francs to complete the necessary sum to take out a patent in France, I should make my fortune. I have already corresponded with the Ministers of Commerce and Public Instruction on the subject; and they have assured me of their patronage."

"So small a sum is the utmost you require!" cried Champignon.

"Every *centime*," answered the wily Belle-Rose; "and the person who would advance the money shall share in the profits."

"Nothing can be fairer," said Champignon, musing: then in a few minutes he added, "I think I could accommodate you—M. Belle-Rose—I am not a rich man—but I have certainly a few francs to spare—yes—I can lend you the money—and with pleasure too."

"My dearest Citron—let me embrace you!" exclaimed Belle-Rose. "You have restored hope to my soul: the nation is swarming with rats, and I am sure of having a rapid sale for my traps. Give me the money; and this very minute will I commence my labours."

The credulous Champignon opened his desk and counted a thousand francs upon the table. Belle-Rose immediately conveyed the glittering coin to his pockets; and having embraced the generous friend he was so grossly deceiving, the adventurer departed, rejoiced at the success of his visit, while the gastronome was delighted at the prospect held out of reaping a considerable benefit from the lucrative speculation. "Belle-Rose is a clever fellow," said he to himself, when he was once more alone: "and before he has done with them, there will not be a rat nor a mouse all over the country."

As Belle-Rose issued from Champignon's shop, he encountered Mr. Clayton, and immediately recognised him to be the gentleman who accompanied the two ladies at Louis Dorval's house, and who had supplied De Rosann with a considerable sum of money. It was a maxim of Belle-Rose never to lose any thing for want of civility, nor for want of asking. He therefore saluted Mr. Clayton, and made a remark relative to the weather, or some common-place matter.

"I think I have had the pleasure of seeing you before," said Mr. Clayton, acknowledging the adventurer's polite bow; "but my memory fails me as I grow older," he added with a smile.

Belle-Rose mentioned his name, and explained where they had met; and Mr. Clayton accidentally noticed that De Rosann was in London.

"I came from England myself three days ago," said Belle-Rose; "and am not at all sorry to be back again in my native land. The English are a—" he was going to say "a miserable, morose, reserved people—" but recollecting Mr. Clayton was himself a son

of Albion, he corrected his unlucky allusion in time, and added "a hospitable, kind, and generous race; but I am fond of the laughter, mirth, and gaiety we meet in France."

"Did you see M. De Rosann in London? or perhaps you accompanied him thither?" said Mr. Clayton.

"We parted at St. Malo six or seven weeks ago," returned Belle-Rose, "totally unaware of each other's intentions; and we accidentally encountered in the English metropolis. De Rosann went by Southampton, and I by Calais, thence direct to London; consequently I arrived before him only a few hours."

"I expect him at St. Malo in a day or two," observed Mr. Clayton. "He would doubtless have been here already, had not the tempestuous weather most probably detained him at Southampton, by which town he intended to return, according to the contents of the last letter I received from him."

"He has left a sad heart behind him," said Belle-Rose, affecting a melancholy tone. "Poor Selina Robson! she doated upon our friend with as sincere an affection as woman can demonstrate towards man."

"What! did M. De Rosann make a conquest amongst my fair countrywomen?" exclaimed Mr. Clayton.

"Their love was reciprocal," returned Belle-Rose. "De Rosann himself has assured me of their mutual attachment. He wore a lock of her hair next to his heart—he passed his days in her society, and his nights in dreaming of her: wherever Miss Selina Robson was, you might be sure Alfred was not far off. At every ball they danced together six or seven *quadrilles* consecutively; they walked out alone in the parks; they wrote long letters to each other, although they met every morning, and separated only in the evening—"

"This is most singular!" cried Mr. Clayton, becoming considerably interested in the lying narrative which Belle-Rose, who was totally ignorant of De Rosann's attachment for Eloise, invented as he told it, according to his usual system of exaggeration, without any decided aim, save that of pretending to have an intimate knowledge of the affairs of others, and to laugh at the credulity of his attentive listeners behind their backs.

"Oh! yes—I assure you, that in the fashionable circles of the West-end nothing was heard nor spoken of save the handsome young Frenchman and the rich banker's daughter."

"Ah! she was a rich banker's daughter, eh?" said Mr. Clayton with a bitter smile, as he cursed in his own mind the mercenary soul that was capable of forgetting so pure a being as his niece, for the temptations which a wealthy dower could offer.

"But their love was disappointed," continued Belle-Rose. "De Rosann proposed—"

"He proposed," echoed Mr. Clayton.

"As I tell you," said Belle-Rose: "he proposed, and was rejected. The old people knew he had not a farthing, and that their daughter's money was the only object which attracted him—still the young lady was certainly very pretty—"

"She was very pretty, eh?" again interrupted the uncle.

"A beautiful creature," returned Belle-Rose: "and between ourselves—I have not the pleasure of knowing your name—De Rosann is no bad judge. But, as I was saying, the old people would not consent—a dreadful scene ensued—Miss Selina fainting, and Alfred threatening to cut his throat. Even I, his best and most intimate friend, his confidant throughout the whole affair—even I was unable to pacify him."

"Was he so much attached to her?"

"He loved her certainly very sincerely—but he loved her money more."

"And wherefore is he coming back to France?"

"Because he has met with a repulse that he cannot easily forget," answered Belle-Rose.

"Thank you for your information—for the news, M. Belle-Rose: I wish you a very good afternoon:" and without waiting to give the other an opportunity of returning his salutation, the wrathful uncle turned abruptly away.

Nothing could exceed Mr. Clayton's indignation. He felt the blow the more deeply, inasmuch as he fancied he had been the innocent means of deluding his niece with false hopes, and of replying to letters filled with perjury, deceit, and falsehood. De Rosaun, he thought, never could have loved Eloise save for interested motives; and he resigned her for the first wealthy young lady he met. Now that his speculation with Miss Robson had failed, he was doubtless about to return to France to prosecute his suit in another quarter. But Mr. Clayton was determined he should not succeed; and he only repented not having listened to the advice of his sister-in-law long ago. That Belle-Rose could have so grossly deceived him, he did not for one moment suspect; and he returned home in a humour so singularly composed of disappointment, indignation, shame, and grief, that he knew not whether to begin with a curse or a sigh.

Eloise and her mother were in the drawing-room, when Mr. Clayton entered, and they both uttered an exclamation of alarm at the same moment; for his altered countenance wore so extraordinary an expression, that they were fearful some accident had befallen him.

"'Tis all over!" he cried, throwing his hat with violence on the table, and flinging himself into a chair. "All confidence in mankind is for ever at an end. Were my own father alive and here to tell me he would do so-and-so, I would not believe him."

"Good God! William," cried Mrs. Clayton, "has any thing happened?"

"De Rosann—"

"De Rosann—oh! what of him?" cried Eloise, her heart sinking within her, for she anticipated some dreadful tidings relative to her lover.

"De Rosann is a villain!" cried Mr. Clayton in a voice of thunder.

"Speak, uncle—speak! what has he done? Oh hasten and

relieve my anxiety—my suspense!”—and the poor girl burst into an agony of tears, while her bosom throbbed convulsively, and a cold chill came over her like the icy touch of death.

“De Rosann has abused my confidence—has deceived me—has deceived you, Eloise—has deceived the whole world,” exclaimed the enraged uncle. “He has paid his addresses to a young lady in London—he has proposed—and he has been rejected. And now that all his hopes in those quarters are at an end—now that his absence has been productive of no good—he declares his intention of returning to France—and will doubtless come to claim the hand of his expectant bride!”

“De Rosann faithless!” cried Eloise, suddenly raising her head, and withdrawing the handkerchief from her eyes: “O no—my dear uncle—do not believe it. You have been deceived by slanderous tongues—evil reports have done him this wrong—I am convinced, I will pledge my existence for his fidelity!”

“Generous girl! alas—that you should thus buoy yourself up with vain hopes!” exclaimed Mr. Clayton. “This moment only have I left an individual who knows him well, who has been his companion in London, who was his confidant throughout—”

“’Tis false—all false!” interrupted Eloise. “That individual cannot be trust-worthy, since he so readily betrays the secrets of his friend. But what is his name—his profession—his rank?”

“His name is Belle-Rose—and he was an associate with De Rosann at Brest!” returned Mr. Clayton.

“Do not credit his tale, then, uncle. He has some motives for thus defaming an absent friend. You owe a duty to yourself—to De Rosann—and to me,” continued Eloise with a vehemence she had never before used; “and that duty is to listen to Alfred’s defence—to accuse him, and to demand proofs of his innocence: and if he be unable to produce such proofs—if he be indeed the faithless, perjured, heartless swindler he is represented—then renounce, forget him—and I will eradicate his image from my breast, although, in so doing, I break my lacerated heart!”

“Eloise—dear Eloise, compose yourself,” cried Mrs. Clayton, terrified at the energy with which the unfortunate girl spoke, and dreadfully disappointed at the fatal discovery she now made of the permanence of her daughter’s affection for De Rosann.

“Proofs are vain; accusation and defence are alike useless,” said Mr. Clayton, obstinately determined not to question the veracity of Belle-Rose, because he deemed the evidence against De Rosann too damning to admit of an easy refutation, and because he felt himself so little in his own estimation at having been thus duped by a boy. “Eloise, you must now nerve yourself to bear the hour of trial: your day-dreams of bliss are past; the anticipated smiles of the future are turned to frowns; and it is my duty,” he continued in an elevated tone of voice, “to protect my relatives from insult—to remove them from a place where they may be exposed to the impertinent apologies of a villain who will doubtless seek, by specious tales, to delude you, Eloise, still farther: it is my duty to protect you, I say, and I will do it. To-

morrow morning, at eight o'clock, we leave St. Malo, on our return to Paris."

"You are right, William," said Mrs. Clayton.

"No, dear uncle—stay, O, stay!" cried Eloise, almost broken-hearted: "believe me, De Rosann is innocent. Why will you condemn him unheard? Why listen to the falsities uttered by one who is a stranger to you?"

"Eloise," returned Mr. Clayton calmly; "De Rosann's mysterious conduct in proceeding to England instead of to Paris, as I advised him; his long absence in London; his continued evasions to excuse his sojourn there before he enclosed a letter purported to be written by an individual possessing the ability to obtain a full pardon for him; and the plain uncontradictory tale of that Belle-Rose, whose confidence in me was certainly indiscreet, without destroying the validity of the evidence; all these circumstances combined, form a fearful accusation against him whom I treated as a friend—whom I loved as a son—O De Rosann—De Rosann!"

And Mr. Clayton wiped away tears from his eyes.

Mr. Clayton was a man of violent prejudices. His present hatred for De Rosann was as great as his former attachment. Indignation had so blinded him, that he would not listen to reason. It was, therefore in vain that Eloise fell upon her knees to endeavour to dissuade him from his purposed departure. Unfortunately her mother perfectly acquiesced in the designs of her brother-in-law, and only supported his opinions with increasing warmth. The wretched girl retired to her chamber and wept bitterly. Not for one instant did she entertain the slightest suspicion of her lover's treachery. She judged his mind and character by her own; she reflected that when he supposed himself to be wealthy and prosperous in his affairs, he demonstrated towards her every proof of a sincere affection which could not have been interested; and she resolved to combat the accusations of her mother and uncle with all the force of argument the emergency of the case might bring to her aid.

In the midst of her sorrowful ruminations, an idea suddenly struck her that animated her countenance with a smile; and she sat down to her desk and wrote a short note, which she carefully sealed and placed in her bosom. When this was done, she felt more tranquil, and suffered new hopes to enliven her spirits; for she remembered that De Rosann could write his justification—that her uncle dared not compromise his character as a just man by refusing to read it—and that they might still be happy.

On the following morning, as Eloise ascended the steps of the carriage that was to bear her back to Paris, she slipped the note into the hands of the porter of the house, and laid her finger upon her rosy lip. The motion was understood and acknowledged by an equally significant nod, to the inexpressible delight of our fair heroine.

CHAPTER XXX.

LEBLOND.

DE ROSANN knocked at the door of the house which Mr. Clayton, his sister-in-law, and niece, had left two days before. The porter answered his summons, and informed him of the family's sudden departure. Our hero remained for some moments rivetted to the spot in stupid astonishment, unable to utter a word: and he was only recalled to himself by the sight of a note which the porter placed in his hands. He tore it open as if life and death were dependant on the contents, and with a beating heart read the following words:—

“Dearest Alfred,

“The tongue of calumny has prejudiced my uncle against you, and made my mother still more resolute than ever to terminate any engagement existing between us. I *alone* am convinced of your constant fidelity, for I judge you by myself. A man, named Belle-Rose, has poured the syllables of poison into the ears of Mr. Clayton. He accuses you of paying your addresses to a banker's daughter in London, and declares that you have met with a repulse. Pardon me, dear Alfred, if I repeat the scandalous tale which I firmly believe to be false. You must write to Mr Clayton, and refute such vile aspersions on your character: for he is so indignant at your supposed misconduct, that he would not listen to you were you to demand an interview, to avoid which he has resolved to leave St. Malo and return to Paris. Address your letter to our old apartments, which we are to occupy again, in the Rue des Pyramides; and do not be alarmed at the suddenness of our departure. The obstacle will be easily surmounted—Mr. Clayton cannot refuse to read your defence—and he is not unjust, nor deaf to the voice of reason, when his passions have had time to cool, and his wrath is moderated.

“Believe me, my dear Alfred,

“Ever your most affectionate

“ELOISE CLAYTON.”

“Noble girl—generous disposition!” exclaimed Alfred, carefully folding up the letter and placing it next to his heart. He then remunerated the porter, who smiled significantly, as if he were aware that the tender note related to a love-affair: but our hero did not stay to notice the man's animated countenance, nor the polite bows he made in return for the fifteen francs he had so easily earned.

Disappointed, but far from despairing, De Rosann returned to the inn; and, notwithstanding the fatigues of travelling which he had already endured, he ordered a post-chaise to be got ready immediately. The services of four horses were this time put in

requisition; and Alfred found himself on his road to Paris, while the landlord declared "That positively of all the obstinately head-strong young men he had ever accidentally seen, none could be feasibly compared to the indubitably mad-brained youth who had instantaneously quitted his hotel, without even prudently giving himself absolutely the time to enjoy comfortably an elegantly arranged repast."

As the weather was hot, and the roads were not exceedingly dusty, De Rosann had ordered the carriage to be opened, by lowering the top: he could thus command a view of the surrounding country as he journeyed onwards to the French capital. About a league from St. Malo he espied a man mounted upon a donkey, and endeavouring to force the poor animal into a gallop—a pace which apparently in no way suited the sober ideas of the obstinate beast, for he suddenly lifted up his heels and threw the luckless rider over his head. Our hero instantly recognised Champignon, and cried out to the postillions to stop for a moment. The gastronome slowly raised himself from the ground, and cast a timid glance at the person seated in the carriage; but the instant he noticed De Rosann, he rushed forward, and gave him such a hearty shake of the hand, that Alfred was obliged to beseech him to relax his iron grasp.

"Can I really believe my own eyes?—is it indeed you, M. De Rosann? or are you dead, and does your ghost wander about these parts, like a spectre in a church-yard?" cried Champignon, overjoyed at thus encountering his late benefactor.

"'Tis really I myself," answered Alfred, with a smile. "But wherefore do you ride on an animal whose stubbornness you cannot overcome?"

"The fact is," said Champignon, "that I am an excellent horseman; but I cannot maintain my seat on a jack-ass."

"I am afraid you will never be a Franconi,* Champignon."

"Call me Citron, if you please," whispered the gastronome.

"Ah! I recollect your prospectus," said our hero. "Mr. Clayton forwarded the parcel to me in London, and I did not fail to make known your scheme to my friends."

"I thank you all the same; but I have renounced the idea of establishing my joint-stock company," observed Champignon, mournfully.

"And wherefore, might I enquire?"

"Because the individuals at a certain place in a certain town could not pay their subscriptions: and my cousin dissuaded me from the enterprise."

"He did perfectly right. But tell me—have you not seen Belle-Rose at St. Malo?" demanded Alfred.

The gastronome instantly related all that passed between himself and the individual in question, whom he had not seen since the day the thousand francs were counted down upon the table. De Rosann thanked Champignon for the information, assured him

* The French *Ducrow*.

that Belle-Rose was nothing more than a common cheat, and bade him adieu with many kind wishes in favour of his speedy success in business. The postillions whipped their horses, Champignon mounted his donkey, and the two equipages separated to pursue their respective directions.

De Rosann was at a loss to conceive whether Belle-Rose had purposely or inadvertently calumniated him in the presence of Mr. Clayton. He did not think his ancient companion was of a malignant disposition: but he knew full well that Belle-Rose seldom opened his lips without uttering an untruth, or exaggerating a trifle till it became an affair of importance. Our hero was moreover aware that Belle-Rose did not know of the engagement subsisting between him and Eloise—unless, indeed, Mr. Clayton had informed him of it during this last visit of the *chevalier d'industrie* to St. Malo. He however persuaded himself that the evil was not irreparable; he buoyed himself up with the hopes held out by Eloise in her letter; and he again satisfactorily contemplated the numerous advocates in his favour which he had lately accumulated.

Our readers may readily suppose that on De Rosann's arrival at Meurice's hotel in Paris, the first step he took towards a reconciliation with Mr. Clayton, was to obey the injunctions of Eloise, and write a long letter to the incensed uncle, explaining the circumstances which were connected with Selina, and of which we have given full and ample accounts in preceding chapters. He detailed undisguisedly the confessions of that unfortunate girl—minutely narrated every step he took in the disagreeable and embarrassing position her love placed him in—and concluded his defence by requesting Mr. Clayton to seek a corroboration from Selina herself, and to inquire of Mr. Robson if he had ever been applied to for his consent to the marriage of De Rosann and his daughter. Alfred annexed to his letter the address of the worthy banker, and implored Mr. Clayton to lose no time in writing to obtain a satisfactory reply that might lead to a rectification of the misunderstanding, and do a calumniated individual a justice but too well merited. He did not, however, explain any other of his adventures, being still resolved to reserve for himself the pleasure of producing an agreeable surprise when his character in Mr. Clayton's estimation should be re-established—an event to which he looked forward with the utmost impatience. Having concluded his lengthy epistle, he carried it himself to the Rue des Pyramides, and was rejoiced to find that the family had returned to the lodgings it formerly occupied ere change of air and scenery was recommended to Eloise, and caused the removal to St. Malo.

Having thus obeyed the dictates of his own judgment as well as the advice of Eloise, our hero hastened to discharge another important duty; and he lost no time in proceeding to the Rue de la Chanoinesse with the bills and other effects he had been authorised to receive for the mysterious Leblond.

Our hero alighted from a cabriolet, which he had hired, opposite a gloomy house in the Rue de la Chanoinesse, and enquired for

the individual whom he sought. According to the directions of the porter, he mounted a narrow stair-case, and knocked at a door on the second story. An old woman admitted him to a dirty apartment, enquired his business, and without saying another word left him alone a good half-hour to his reflections. When his patience was more than exhausted, she again made her appearance, and desired him to follow her. He obeyed the command, somewhat sulkily given, and was introduced to a species of office, or study, where sat a middle-aged man busily employed in writing at a desk. The old woman motioned our hero to be seated, and retired on tip-toe, as if she were afraid of disturbing her master.

It will be recollected that when Leblond spoke to De Rosann and Belle-Rose through the *guichet* of the *cachot* at Verneuil, the night was dark, and all objects were indistinguishable. Alfred did not therefore know whether he were now in the presence of Leblond or a stranger. But he was not long kept in suspense. The person at the desk soon laid aside his pen, and turned towards our hero, who sat impatiently on his chair, awaiting the moment when he was to give an account of the commission with which he had been charged.

"M. Alfred De Rosann, I believe," said the man of business.

"The same," returned our hero; "and you are M. Leblond, I presume."

"You are right. Have you received my last letter, in which I requested you to become the bearer of certain effects—"

"I have executed your orders to the best of my endeavour," returned De Rosann, interrupting the other, and laying a quantity of papers upon the desk.

"You have been zealous and diligent in the cause," said Leblond, with a gracious smile, as he cast a hasty glance over the bills which Alfred had brought from London; "and be assured that an ample reward will not be lacking to recompense you for your services."

"I have already experienced many kindnesses at your hands," cried De Rosann; "and I return you my most sincere thanks for the royal pardon you condescended to procure me."

"Speak not of such a trifle: your gratitude will shortly be put to a more severe test than perhaps you imagine. The time is nearly at hand when you must prove that benefits are not thrown away upon you, and that you can be trusted in affairs much more important than the one already confided to you."

"Show me my duties—point out a means by which I can demonstrate my gratitude, and I shall not be found backward in serving those to whom I am under a thousand obligations. But wherefore this reserve?" exclaimed De Rosann: "wherefore—"

"Seek not as yet to be acquainted with mysteries I dare not develop. Recollect that I am only an agent—that I do not even myself know the entire *arcana* which you are desirous should be exposed to your view, and that I am subservient to higher authorities, whose mandates I cannot disobey. Even in my own dwelling—in this room where we are now talking—would my life be taken from

me, if I betrayed the little entrusted to me. The very walls of Paris have ears—spies are in every quarter; you think you converse with a common acquaintance in a *café*, or a news-room, and your words are repeated again; thence are your actions judged. As I informed you in my letter, the moment when you are to act for those who have befriended you, will proclaim its own arrival—will denote by terrible signs its own presence. Wait patiently, therefore—that moment may be in an hour—to-morrow—or a year hence.”

“It would be indelicate for me to question you farther,” said De Rosann, considerably disappointed at the probable result of his visit, which instead of explaining only increased the mystery he was so anxious to penetrate. “You have no farther commands for me at present.”

“None,” returned Leblond. “But before you depart, allow me to ask you a few questions, and do not deem them impertinent.”

“Speak! I shall answer your interrogations with pleasure.”

“You have no idea of entering into business a second time?”

“Not the slightest. I am totally unfitted for commercial transactions; they neither suit my taste nor my ability.”

“Nor do you intend to embrace any profession?”

“Decidedly not. I am perhaps on the eve of marriage—at least, I hope so—and shall therefore become a peaceable citizen.”

“Have you any private resources of your own?” enquired Leblond.

“I lately inherited a considerable sum of money,” replied our hero.

“You intend to reside in Paris for the present?”

“Yes; particularly as it is uncertain when my services may be required,” answered Alfred, alluding to his present companion’s own words.

“Good!” cried Leblond, rising from his seat. “I am obliged to you for the frankness with which you have replied to my queries, and again repeat that you will not go unrewarded, if you continue to evince the same zealous disposition in the cause of patrons whose power, whose authority, and whose means are extensive, although as yet invisible.”

“Might I be allowed to ask if Belle-Rose be still engaged in the same service?” said De Rosann, after a momentary pause.

“He is,” returned Leblond, casting his eye over one of the pages of a ponderous book, on which was written an immense number of names, with the professions, abodes, and resources of the individuals thus inscribed on the leaves of the vast folio. “And, if I mistake not,” added Leblond, once more referring to the book, “he is at this moment in Paris. But perhaps you have seen him?”

“No; I asked for information,” remarked De Rosann, “and to have an opportunity of advising you to beware of him; for there is no meanness, baseness, nor treachery, of which he is not capable.”

“But he cannot cheat us,” answered Leblond, with a peculiar

emphasis : “ he dare not, even if he wished and had the power to deceive your masters and mine.”

De Rosann had nothing to reply to this assurance ; he accordingly took his leave of Leblond, and returned to Meurice’s hotel, where he shut himself up in his room to ponder on the conversation that had taken place during the interview with the mysterious agent of mysterious superiors.

But it was in vain that he endeavoured to fix his sole thoughts upon that topic : the image of the beautiful Eloise perpetually intervened, and changed the current of his ideas. He could never sufficiently admire the generous disposition of the heroic girl, that refused to listen to the calumniating tongues which were anxious to asperse the character of her lover, and separate them for ever. He called to mind all her former tenderness and unquestionable attachment when, in an hour of peril and distress, he was the inmate of a gloomy dungeon. Now that Fortune smiled upon him, and Prosperity, with a bland countenance, seemed to beckon him forward to eventual success, he was determined to evince his gratitude and unchangeable affection to his beloved Eloise, and devote every instant of his time to promote her felicity, so soon as he could obtain a legal right to declare himself her protector and friend. And he felt that he should be proud in presenting such a faultless bride to the numerous acquaintances who would soon flock round him, when the tongue of fame had proclaimed his return to Paris, his innocence, his pardon, and his independence.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE CITIZENS OF PARIS.

DE ROSANN passed a restless night. His mind was too much agitated by a variety of conflicting ideas to allow sleep to visit his eyes. He tossed backwards and forwards on his slumberless pillow, at one moment pondering on the mysterious conduct of Leblond, at another on the noble behaviour of Eloise. He would then blame himself for not having made her uncle acquainted with every thing that had happened to him since they last met—the particulars relative to the documents of the deceased Marquis de Denneville, the dying request of La Motte, and the pardon that had been procured for him through the influence of his secret patrons. In five minutes a complete reaction took place in our hero’s opinions. He applauded himself for having withheld those important communications, and felt certain that his defence, and an application to Mr. Robson by letter, would terminate the whole affair in his favour. He moreover recollected that some consideration was due to his own pride, and that he was not to be idly accused by every scandalous tongue, nor to be condemned without explanation by a prejudiced judge. On these reflections would intrude the idea that he ought to make any sacrifice to forward his

suit with Eloise, and to give pleasure to one who promised to be a powerful advocate in his cause.

So early as seven o'clock, did De Rosann leave his feverish couch ; and having partaken of a hasty meal, he sought the fresh air to dissipate a partial headache, which want of sleep had most probably caused. Meurice's hotel was then in the Rue St. Honoré. Our hero directed his steps towards the fashionable quarter of Paris ; and having traversed the Place Vendôme, he gained the Boulevards by the Rue de la Paix. The morning was fine—the rays of a jovial sun gilded the thousand towers of the sovereign city of Europe ; and all nature seemed blythe and gay. The shops were already opened ; but it appeared to our hero, as he advanced along the shady walk which surrounds so considerable a portion of the gay city, that an unusual number of people for such an hour was abroad. At length he noticed many with anxious faces—others bustling backwards and forwards from one house to another—some assuming important airs of mystery—groups here and there gathered together in earnest conversation—a few carrying newspapers in their hands, and stopping their acquaintances to point out a particular paragraph—all this struck De Rosann as singular and alarming.

When he arrived at the Porte St. Martin, he turned to retrace his steps—and the mystery, the bustle, and the agitation were still the same. Some had smiles upon their countenances—others showed evident signs of terror ; one spoke to his neighbour in a tone of energy and vehemence ; a second listened with mouth half open and staring eyes ; a third rubbed his hands together, as if he were satisfied at a particular occurrence ; a fourth endeavoured to repress the swaggering air of the individual with whom he was conversing ; a fifth cast anxious looks around ; in fine, it was but too evident that the public spirit was labouring under a strong excitement, the cause of which was an enigma our hero could not solve. A secret presentiment of foreboding evil took possession of his mind. He felt an agitation suddenly seize upon him, and he endeavoured in vain to account for it. He experienced little dread as to the eventual success of his suit with Eloise ; his property was safe ; his person appeared in no danger ; and yet he was uneasy. He seemed to draw his breath with difficulty as he walked along ; he saw not things as they usually were ; a change was perceptibly taking place, but a change of what he could not determine. Paris wore an air of confusion, dismay, and alarm ; the atmosphere, that hung over her head, appeared pregnant with a storm about to burst ; the looks of her citizens, as they walked or stood in the streets, were foreboding and prophetic. Still our hero was at a loss to imagine how those looks were foreboding, and the nature of the events they had the air of prophesying. He essayed to persuade himself that all was calm and tranquil as usual, and that a disordered imagination tortured things into unnatural shapes. But he could not satisfy his mind that it was an illusion—he was no Pyrrhonian—he confounded not ideas and matter—he saw strange sights, and he believed in their existence.

He walked with a rapid, though uneven step, and at length arrived opposite to Tortoni's. At nine o'clock in the morning there are generally very few loungers outside. The politicians discuss their newspaper with their breakfast in the gilded *salons*; the speculator, the banker, the discounteur, and the correspondents of the *Times*, *Advertiser*, *Herald*, *Post*, and *Chronicle*, do not throng opposite the door, and form into separate groups, till later. But De Rosann saw that they had already arrived—that the speculator had left his accounts, the banker his warm bed, the discounteur his cabriolet, in which he visited the merchants or tradesmen with whom he did business, and the correspondent of the English journals had deserted his desk. They were gathered into separate knots; each knot appeared to have a spokesman to explain something of vital importance to the rest; and the others listened with attention. They conversed in low whispers, as if afraid that the very walls should hear their opinions; they cast frequent glances of uneasy anxiety around, fearful of being overheard by one who would betray them. And yet the topic of their conversation was generally known. De Rosann marked the air of agitation, the gaze of astonishment, the attitude of resignation, the smile of incredulity, the laugh of assurance, the glow of pride, the shudder of cowardice, the silence of conviction, the noise of doubt, and the tranquillity of hope. Every passion, every feeling was there excited: the signs were ominous and alarming.

De Rosann became more and more curious to ascertain the cause of this extraordinary excitement. He ascended the steps that lead to the front parlour of Tortoni's *café*, and seated himself at a table. The waiter desired to know what he would take. Our hero hesitated—his mind was in a state of confusion—he had already breakfasted—and he ordered breakfast a second time in the agitation of the moment. The only person who appeared indifferent to what was going on, was the female seated at the bar. De Rosann approached her, made a polite bow, and requested to be informed of the causes of the mysterious behaviour he noticed in every one save herself. The female did not answer a word, but took a newspaper from a shelf, and placed it in Alfred's hands. He thanked her, returned to his seat, and cast his eyes over the journal, doubtful whether his question had been understood. It was the *Moniteur* of the day before—the twenty-sixth of July, 1830; and the first words that attracted De Rosann's attention, after a cursory glance, were those ever memorable ones—“*The freedom of the periodical press is suspended!*”*

There was at once an explanation of all he had seen, and all he had deemed unaccountable. From his palace of St. Cloud the rash monarch issued those terrible mandates that were to pave the way for the overthrow of his dynasty, place another upon the throne, and cast his ministers into a prison. The royal tyrant, in his insolent pride, deemed that the sons of France were to be trampled under foot, and to bow the knee to his majesty in blind idolatry. De Rosann scarcely believed his sight—he gazed a second time at

* *La Liberté de la presse périodique est suspendue!*

the journal he held in his hand, and still the official column commenced with the same words—the Gazette declared the privilege of recording public opinions to be suddenly withdrawn. Hence those diversified feelings expressed upon different countenances; hence those anxious glances, those furtive looks, those timid whisperings. But the popular fury soon broke forth: astonishment yielded to indignation, indignation to cries of “Liberty,” and the crown trembled upon the head of the imprudent Charles. Like the fluid communicated by the chains of a galvanic battery, flew the spirit of rebellion; an oppressed people arose to combat for its rights and for its privileges; the tri-coloured flag was hoisted from many a window; the tri-coloured cockade was attached to many a cap; De Rosann now guessed the meaning of the watch-word he had whispered in the ear of Plombier; all mystery was dispelled; he was one of the chosen partizans of the original agitators; and, according to his promise to Leblond, he seized a musket and a sword, and enrolled himself amongst the ranks of those who fought for their rights against the evil devices of tyranny and oppression!

For three days the combat raged with sanguinary violence. The trees of the Boulevards were cut down to form barricades against the approach of the cavalry regiments which still supported the Bourbon cause; and when the citizens lacked arms and ammunition, they tore up the pavement to hurl at their opponents. From every window was pointed a deadly weapon of some kind: old men, young maidens, infants, and feeble women lent their aid to repel the royalists. Many a widow avenged her slaughtered husband’s massacre—many a veteran, with hoary locks and wrinkled brow, laid aside the staff that for years had supported his tottering limbs, and brandished the glittering sword. The tri-coloured banner waved in all directions—cries of “Freedom!” echoed on every side; and the rash monarch repented his audacity when too late.

De Rosann became the leader of a gallant band of young heroes, chiefly students and gentlemen of fortune, who were rejoiced at this opportunity of displaying their patriotism, and of combatting in the cause of their country’s liberties. They formed a squadron of daring warriors, and rushed upon the mounted foemen with the courage of lions joining in deadly strife. Where the extremities of the Rue de la Paix and the Rue Neuve Saint Augustin join the Boulevards, did they combat long and manfully against the detachment of cavalry that opposed them. Barricades were formed to repulse the royalists, and De Rosann’s band every moment gained ground as their foemen retreated. The skirmishing fight lasted till the little squad of heroes drove the lancers as far as the gates of the noble dwelling occupied by Prince Polignac himself, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Thither did the defeated cavalry retreat; and De Rosann and his band dared follow them no longer; for their eyes caught sight of the massive ordnance which was drawn up in terrible array opposite the house of the prime minister, and on the side of the Madeleine that faces the extremity of the Boulevard. Between those two points, there was not a soul, save the artillery.

men standing with lighted matches close to their cannon. De Rossan saw that it was madness to advance any farther; he accordingly ordered a retreat; and placing himself at the head of his companions, he led them to encounter fresh adversaries.

The civil strife was terrible in the extreme. Fathers fought with their sons in the respective ranks of the confused battle—uncles combatted hand to hand against their nephews—cousins, expecting to find each other serving under the same banners, encountered on opposite sides, and did not tarry to expostulate, but directed their deadly weapons each to the heart of his relative. Thus parricides and fratricides were not wanting to crown the cup of general misery—bloodshed, murder, and strife afforded a rich banquet to the vultures of slaughter. The streets were encumbered with dead bodies—horses and men fell together wounded on the ground—the stones, which the citizens tore from the streets, rained like torrents of hail upon the ranks of the royalists—servant fought against master—the dependant opposed his benefactor—the student lifted the gleaming sword over the head of his tutor—the pupil heeded not the lamentable cries of his master—school-boy, collegian, apprentice, mixed in the commotion, and either excited the tumult by their shouts, or aided their brethren in the fight.

When the officers and dependants of Charles the Tenth were expelled by the incensed populace from all the public buildings, the revolutionary mob took possession of the Tuileries, the Hotel of the Ministry of Finance, the Bank of France, and other government institutions: and it is a well-substantiated fact that the most indigent and poverty-stricken of the sentries placed in different directions, not only refrained from touching a jewel of the smallest value, but also threatened to put to death any one who attempted to take advantage of the tumult, and appropriate the wealth he might find in the palace of the Tuileries to his own use. On the first day of the revolution, an immense sum of money arrived in Paris from M. Rothschild's house in London. It was packed up in a cart, and was accompanied by a trust-worthy individual of the name of Atkins from Calais. Mr. Atkins entered Paris without the slightest suspicion of the sudden tumult that had arisen in the city; and it was not till he found it impossible to recede, that the real state of affairs was communicated to him. He nevertheless proceeded strait to the Bank of France; and although he was surrounded by the lowest of the low—although he passed through a miserable set of beings, half naked—half starved as they were, not a hand was stretched out against the tempting treasure,—not a glance betokened an evil design—not a gesture threatened its security.* Poverty was forgotten—hunger was disregarded during those eventful days. The French fought for liberty and not for gain,—they did not make the principles of a glorious insurrection an excuse for pillage and licentiousness. Paris was crowded with dead bodies—but they all fell in the cause of valour, whichever banner they had fought under. No robbery, no rape, no misdemeanor of any kind sullied that revolution, nor did it prepare a throne for a Robespierre and a Napoleon.

* Fact: *me ipso teste*.—G. W. M. R.

It was a glorious sight to see heroes fighting in a righteous cause. Paris had awakened from a profound stupor—the people were wearied of languishing beneath a tyrant's rod—the watchword had been passed round—and thousands came forward to hoist the tri-coloured flag. There was but little indecision after the appearance of that royal mandate, which threatened to reduce a mighty nation to the lowest abyss of slavery. The flame of the revolution broke out in two or three places at the same time ; and De Rosann was one of those who comprehended the reason of so sudden and simultaneous an insurrection. Seventy-two short hours would not have sufficed to cast off chains artfully woven, and craftily thrown round a million of men, had not preparations and resolutions how to act been primarily thought of and planned. Hundreds of strangers were in the ranks of the insurgents ; inhabitants of distant towns were on the spot to aid the popular cause ; and the visage of many a notorious character was recognised by the police in the heat of the battle. The refuse of society—the lowest of the low—the escaped criminal, the undetected malefactor, the lurking thief, the daring adventurer, and the insolent beggar, all forgot their separate avocations, and joined in the general shout of “ Liberty ! liberty ! ”

Foremost in the ranks of the revolutionists, De Rosann recognised Leblond. That mysterious agent of the vast intrigues which had accomplished the events now brought about, gave a significant nod to our hero—and when a sudden movement brought them near each other, he cried, in a triumphant tone, “ Did I not prophesy truly, M. De Rosann ? Has not the glorious moment proclaimed its own presence ? ” And without waiting for a reply, he again brandished the gory weapon of death which he held in his hand, and rushed upon the royal cohorts with demoniac courage.

It must not be imagined that our hero forgot his beloved Eloise in the din, the excitement, and the danger of battle. Often did he tremble for her safety ; and when on the morning of the third day he understood that the strife was bloody and well-maintained in the Rue des Pyramides, and in all the immediate neighbourhood of the Tuileries, he felt his heart sink within him ; for thousands had already paid dearly for a rash curiosity, and had been killed at their very windows by the musquetry of the soldiers or the random shots of the citizens. Towards the quarter where Eloise dwelt with her mother and uncle, did De Rosann hasten, followed by the little band that placed itself under his guidance. He cast an anxious glance towards the windows of the apartments which he well remembered, and to his inexpressible delight he saw that the white Venetian blinds were fast closed. His mind felt relieved of a considerable weight ; and he turned his attention to the surrounding warfare.

The civil conflict raged in that quarter with terrible violence. The street was entirely divested of pavement—the marks of the musket-balls may be seen at the present moment upon the pillars of the colonnades and the walls of the houses. At the corner of the Rue St. Honoré, a handful of revolutionists combatted valiantly

against an overpowering military force. De Rosann hurried to the assistance of the gallant squadron ; and, to his surprise, discovered that it was headed by Belle-Rose, who fought like a lion, desperately and bravely. His left arm hung useless by his side—his left cheek displayed a ghastly wound—and his clothes were covered with dripping gore. Still did his right hand wield the glittering sword, and deal slaughter around. Our hero himself was astonished at the extraordinary magnanimity of one whom he fancied too much devoted to existence to risk it in a cause that would not eventually much benefit an adventurer accustomed to live upon his wits. But Belle-Rose was a Frenchman in the true spirit of the word—and when once excited, he forgot everything save glory and renown.

De Rosann's aid arrived too late. Combatting against fearful odds, and pierced by a multitude of weapons—covered with honourable wounds, Belle-Rose became gradually weak and faint—his sight was suddenly dimmed—his brain was confused—he struck feeble and harmless blows at random—and at length fell in a state of insensibility into the arms of his former companion. A feeling of commiseration took possession of our hero's breast. He knew not whither to bear the dying man—he could not leave him to expire in the street, and perhaps to be trampled upon ere the vital spark should have left his body. Irresolute how to act, he drew the almost inanimate Belle-Rose away from the heat of the battle, and deposited him beneath the colonnade which runs on each side of the Rue des Pyramides. There he halted and turned round as if to seek a place of security whither he could carry his burthen. The wicket of a large gate or *porte-cochere* was open ; and he had accidentally stopped before it. He gazed wistfully into the yard behind—and immediately recognised the house where the Claytons resided. He did not hesitate another moment, but dragged the still senseless form he protected to the porter's lodge, and hastily recommended the dying man to the care of an old woman whom he found there. She was busily engaged in rehearsing her prayers, when Alfred thus unceremoniously interrupted her devotions. The pious portress—for she it was herself—instantly rose from her knees, and obeyed De Rosann's commands : she recollected his handsome countenance, and was moreover humane in her disposition. Alfred enquired if Miss Clayton were in good health ; and having received satisfactory replies to that and other questions which he put to the old woman relative to his adored Eloise, he recommended Belle-Rose to the especial care of the kind portress ; and once more returned to take the lead of his gallant followers.

In the meantime, the portress examined the wounds of the individual confided to her charge, and succeeded in bringing him back to partial recollection. A faint animation excited his pulse, and gave tokens of a feeble existence not yet past away, but soon to evaporate. She placed him upon a bed, and opened her drawers to seek for rags, to staunch the blood that flowed from many places at the same time. But either she had not the linen she looked for, or else the confusion and agitation of her ideas so bewildered her



Death of Bull-Whacker

senses, that she could not find a single morsel. In this dilemma she bethought herself of the well-known charitable and compassionate disposition of Mrs. Clayton; and hurried to the apartments occupied by that lady, to solicit the wherewith to arrest the ebbing tide of life that issued from the wounds of the dying man. Her request was instantly granted; and Mrs. Clayton, accompanied by her brother-in-law, descended to aid the portress in her humane task. Belle-Rose had opened his eyes during her absence, and was gazing wildly around him when his benefactors entered the lodge. His glance encountered that of Mr. Clayton, and a smile of satisfaction animated his pallid countenance. He raised himself with considerable difficulty on his right arm—repulsed the portress who advanced towards the bed bearing linen and bandages in her hands—and beckoned Mr. Clayton to approach.

"I have but a short time to live," said Belle-Rose in a faint voice almost depressed to a mere whisper, "and I am desirous of quitting this world in peace with all men. You are acquainted with Alfred de Rosann—he was my friend—my benefactor. He acted liberally towards me—and I repaid his kindness by ingratitude. There breathes not a nobler character than De Rosann—tell him I said so in my last moments. Tell him that I—yes, I—was one of the three robbers who endeavoured to despoil him of the treasures which were confided to his charge by a mercantile house in London, and which were destined for a person named Leblond, in Paris. Tell him I have done him that grievous wrong—but do not forget to say—"

"And his attachment to Miss Robson, the banker's daughter," cried Mr. Clayton, unable to restrain his impatience, "the proposal he made for her hand—his repulse—his disappointment—"

"All false—all pure invention—all calumny!" returned Belle-Rose, hanging down his head, and stifling a sob.

"God be thanked!" said Mr. Clayton: "his defence is as true and correct as I could have wished it to be. We need not wait for Mr. Robson's letter."

"If my levity—my unpardonable misrepresentations have done him harm in your estimation," continued Belle-Rose, "hasten to render him the justice he deserves; for I repeat, that there exists not a nobler character than Alfred de Rosann!"

"Bind his wounds—take care of him—comfort his poor soul—and assure him of pardon on the part of De Rosann;—I accept his apologies in the name of my friend—tell him he is forgiven," cried Mr. Clayton in a hurried tone of voice; and without waiting for a reply, he hastily left the lodge to the astonishment of the portress, who nevertheless proceeded to dress the wounds of the dying man. But all her care was vain—Belle-Rose' last hour was come—and no human agency could add another day to his existence, nor extend his mis-spent life. He died insensible to the feeble endeavours of those around to procrastinate the fatal moment—and in his death he enjoyed a more honourable reputation than he had acquired during the numerous years he had devoted to dissipation, to folly, and to crime. He was subsequently interred in the cemetery of *Père*

la Chaise ; and a simple cross of wood marks the resting place of one of the heroes of July, 1830. Peace be to his soul !

Mr. Clayton hurried to the drawing-room, where Eloise was seated in silent horror at the dreadful work of slaughter that was being performed outside ; and he embraced his niece with a cry of joy. He forgot the terrors of the revolution—the vicinity of carnage—the deadly deeds that were done in the streets : all he thought of—all he cared for at the moment, was that De Rosann was innocent. Some minutes elapsed ere Eloise could prevail upon her uncle to moderate his sudden and apparently misplaced felicity ; but when he had so far composed himself as to relate the brief confession of the penitent Belle-Rose, the mind of Eloise experienced a relief, that brought tears to her eyes. She wept through excess of feeling—and those feelings were of happiness.

With what delight did she now contemplate her generous defence of her lover's conduct ; and how heart-broken would she have been, had she ever given credit to the calumniating tales which had prejudiced her mind against him. Her confidence was not bestowed on one whose treacheries had rendered him unworthy of her regard ; and she felt proud of possessing his love, and of having undertaken his cause with a perseverance that had not failed to offend Mr. Clayton, and that had drawn upon her the reproaches of her mother. Time had proved the truth of her assertion—time had justified her firmness in advocating the part of her lover. This conviction of his permanent fidelity was an ample reward for all that she had been obliged to endure ; and her countenance was radiant with joy as she returned her uncle's caresses.

One fear, however, still harassed her, and soon recalled the melancholy expression of alarm and anxiety to her cheek. She was afraid that Alfred might expose himself to danger, or might even be rash enough to take an active part in the civil conflict. Mr. Clayton entertained the same suspicions ; but he affected a certainty, which he did not feel, that our hero would not interfere in the disordered state of affairs. At the request of his niece, he accordingly wrote the following note to De Rosann :—

“ My dear Alfred,

“ I have wronged you, and have at length discovered my error. Forgive me, my friend—and believe that the tale must have been very specious to have so grossly misled me. I hope to see you here as speedily as possible.

“ Yours affectionately,

“ *July 29th, 1830.*

“ WILLIAM CLAYTON.”

This laconic epistle was not despatched to Meurice's Hotel, until the following morning ; as no one could be found to venture into the streets until a proclamation, signed by General Lafayette, publicly declared that the strife was concluded, and that the citizens of Paris might venture abroad in perfect safety.

Three days were thus sufficient for an incensed people to cast off their chains, and hurl a tyrant from his throne. The rash king,

when it was too late, in vain sent messengers to the chiefs of the revolutionary body : no compromise could be made with a monarch who had violated the liberties of his subjects, and had drawn upon himself by his own misdeeds a righteous doom. Exiled from his native land, abandoned by the numerous dependants he had lately seen humbling their heads to his august presence, the royal wanderer left his regal halls at St. Cloud, and fruitlessly deplored the follies that had deprived him of a crown he might have worn in peace. The dynasty of the Bourbons was thus overthrown—the tri-coloured banner waved on every house—the news of this great and sudden blow was quickly spread over the face of the country—and till the end of time must the Genius of France, as she turns the pages of her favourite nation's annals, point to the one on which are recorded the glorious events of the 27th, 28th, and 29th of July, 1830.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DECISION.

ON the morning of the thirtieth of July, Mrs. Clayton, her brother-in-law, and Eloise, were seated at the breakfast-table, and were engaged in a conversation, the topic of which might be easily divined by the down-cast looks of our heroine, the impatient gestures of her uncle, and the forced tranquillity of her mother.

“Although the innocence of De Rosann be proven in the affair relative to the banker's daughter,” said Mrs. Clayton, replying to an observation just made by her brother-in-law, “my resolutions still remain the same : and Eloise must endeavour to conquer her unhappy passion.”

“Say no more upon the subject,” cried Mr. Clayton with an unusual petulance. “I perfectly remember your vow—and begin to think it is impossible to convince you of its injustice. At the same time allow me to observe, that I would willingly give half of my fortune—nay, the whole—were it possible for De Rosann to discover the particulars of your father's sudden disappearance, and the fate of his property.”

“Happily the days of fairies and enchanters have gone by,” returned Mrs. Clayton triumphantly : “I have therefore no reason to repent my asseveration, nor will you have an opportunity of parting with the moiety of your fortune.”

“I am afraid not,” said Mr. Clayton drily, and in a tone of voice that plainly indicated his desire to drop the conversation.

Mrs. Clayton would have continued the unwelcome topic, had not a violent knock at the door startled her as she was about to speak. Eloise's heart palpitated violently—a well-known step was heard on the oaken floor of the anti-chamber—and a servant announced M. De Rosann. Forgetful of her mother's presence, Eloise arose and threw herself into his arms : and the lovers indulged in a long and fervent embrace. Mrs. Clayton sate stupefied

upon her chair, undecided how to act, and trembling with emotions she could scarcely account for. Alfred saluted her respectfully, and turned to grasp the hand of Mr. Clayton, who made up by the cordiality of his welcome for the coldness of his stern but conscientious sister-in-law.

"I have only this moment received your note, or I should have hastened hither before," said De Rosann, addressing himself to Mr. Clayton.

"It was dated yesterday, but was not sent till this morning," returned that gentleman.

"For three days and three nights I have not been to the hotel," continued Alfred: "I have laboured in the defence of my country's rights."

"What! did you engage in the strife—in the revolution?" exclaimed Eloise, turning pale at the bare idea of her lover's danger, although it was now past.

"I did my duty, Eloise," cried our hero, a glow of satisfaction and pride animating his countenance: "I led a gallant band to the aid of my fellow-countrymen that fought in the cause of freedom; and I have ere now been informed of the death of the unfortunate Belle-Rose, whom I rescued from destruction."

"Was it you that brought Belle-Rose hither?" cried Mr. Clayton in astonishment. "I wonder how the portress could fail to mention the circumstance?"

"She has just explained to me her motives," answered De Rosann; "and I could not do otherwise than approve of her delicacy and forethought."

"The same motives must account for her silence concerning yourself, when the dying sinner confessed the falsity of the calumnies he had uttered against you, and that prejudiced you in my estimation. But let us forget the trivial misunderstanding," said Mr. Clayton, again grasping our hero's hand with affectionate warmth; "and do you recount to us the history of your adventures in London."

"In the first place," began Alfred, "I must inform you of my especial good fortune relative to La Motte."

"The villain who deceived you—was he not?" interrupted Mr. Clayton, turning towards our hero, and preparing to listen with the greatest attention.

"The same," said De Rosann. "I met him in London, and exposed his conduct to a worthy individual he was endeavouring to deceive, as he deceived me. Shortly after this occurrence, I was sent for to attend his death-bed. I went to assure him of my full pardon, and to breathe consolation to his departing spirit. He died, and left me the heir to his whole property, which amounted to upwards of forty thousand pounds, besides a small legacy set apart to discharge a just debt."

"Bravo!" shouted Mr. Clayton, rubbing his hands together, and repeating the word several times to demonstrate his joy, while Eloise congratulated her lover with an expressive glance, and Mrs Clayton maintained a stubborn silence.

"Thus Fortune was favourable to me in that instance," continued our hero, when the uncle had relapsed once more into an attitude of attention, and the niece had received a smile as a return for the tender look she gave De Rosann: "nor did that same capricious Fortune embitter her honied cup by poisoned dregs. Leblond fulfilled the promise he made me in the letter I enclosed to you, Mr. Clayton; and there is my pardon," added Alfred, throwing a paper upon the table.

"Here are two different documents," said Mr. Clayton.

"Ah! I forgot to state in its place," returned De Rosann, "that La Motte drew up and signed a full account of his nefarious cheat practised upon me, and caused it to be witnessed by the French consul, the more fully to establish my innocence."

"Better and better!" exclaimed Mr. Clayton, glancing towards his sister-in-law, and displaying the precious deeds with as much satisfaction as if they were his own, and as if he stood in our hero's situation.

De Rosann and Eloise again exchanged significant looks of love and delight; and the former continued in the following terms:—

"But this is not all. I have made you acquainted with my accession of property—my pardon—and my justification. A more important circumstance still remains to be explained. My journey to England, and absence from this country, have not been without effect: let us now see the result my toils are calculated to produce. Mrs. Clayton," he said, addressing himself to that lady, "I once sought your daughter's hand as her equal—as an eligible suitor, and I was accepted. Misfortune—the treachery of a supposed friend reduced me to humiliation, to infamy, and to shame. You then revoked your consent to our future union—my prospects were wretched in the extreme—and perhaps you did right. But again—as an equal—as an innocent man—as a person possessing a competency—as a gentleman, in fine, I demand a renewal of your approbation to my marriage with Miss Clayton. You shake your head—you are impatient, Madam—you mean to refuse."

"I hope not," cried Mr. Clayton, sitting uneasily on his chair, and glancing first at his sister-in-law, then at his niece, and lastly at Alfred, whose countenance was flushed with the excitement he underwent as he spoke to Mrs. Clayton.

"I am sorry, M. De Rosann—I congratulate you most sincerely on your late successes—but the hand of Eloise—" and the stern parent hesitated; for her eye caught sight of the ashy pale countenance of her daughter, and she feared to proceed.

"Well, then," exclaimed our hero, hastening to relieve himself and her he adored of a terrible suspense, "suffer me to show you that I am more generous than you, madam—and that I bear you no ill-will; no rancorous feeling do I entertain against you. I shall go hence and be unhappy—but first I must perform a duty which Providence alone could have charged me to acquit."

"No—no—you shall be happy!" shouted Mr. Clayton, casting terrible glances at his sister-in-law.

"Allow me to say two words more," interrupted Alfred mildly,

"and I have done. Mrs. Clayton," he continued, turning towards that lady, and addressing himself to her, "will you permit me to inquire if you be acquainted with the real name and rank of your late father?"

"Certainly not!" cried Mr. Clayton, starting from his seat: "and will you believe the ridiculous vow my sister has made relative to your engagement with her daughter? She declares that her approbation shall alone be elicited when you develop those very mysteries to which you have just alluded."

"'Tis singular!" exclaimed De Rosann, a gleam of irrepressible joy illuminating his handsome features. "Then it remains for me to perform the rest."

"How? what?" shouted the uncle, throwing himself upon his chair, and resigning himself to the bitter conviction that Alfred was about to manifest a proper spirit, and retort upon Mrs. Clayton as she deserved, but in a manner that would break the heart of Eloise.

"Madam, you are the daughter of the Marquis de Denneville!" said our hero, addressing himself to Mrs. Clayton.

"Impossible!" cried the mother, fixing the eye of astonishment upon De Rosann, and waiting with breathless anxiety to hear more.

"Yes—madam," he continued; "you are the daughter of the Marquis de Denneville. Your property, amounting to thirty-two thousand pounds, English money, is at your disposal. There are the deeds which prove the truth of my statement, and which will establish your claim to your father's wealth:" and our hero handed the mysterious papers to their legitimate owner.

"A miracle! a miracle!" thundered Mr. Clayton, once more starting from his chair. "The vow must be fulfilled—the oath must be accomplished. Alfred, there is your future bride—her mother cannot recall her words."

"Nor will she endeavour to do so," cried Mrs. Clayton. "M. De Rosann, you have done me a service I can never forget—you have developed a mystery it has long been my sincerest wish to fathom—and the least I can do to demonstrate my gratitude, is to accord you the hand of my daughter. I shall moreover settle the wealth thus providentially recovered upon her; and at my death all I now possess will alike devolve to you and to Eloise."

De Rosann and Eloise rushed into each other's arms, and indulged in a second embrace as long and ardent as the first. Mr. Clayton clapped his hands together in an ecstasy of joy, and his sister-in-law was not sorry that the affair had terminated thus amicably.

Our hero now related the providential manner whereby he became possessed of the documents that had worked so favourable a change in his favour. He accounted for the sudden deviation from his intentions of hastening to Paris, according to his agreement with Mr. Clayton at the farm-house—he detailed the various treacheries of Belle-Rose, and the difficulty he experienced in recovering the precious papers: he related more fully than before his adventures at the galleys, his escape, the history of Champignon, and the hopeless attachment of Selina Robson. He did

not forget the duel—the circumstance of the horses' running away with the post-chaise, in which he travelled from London to Southampton—and the particulars of the attempt made upon his property by Belle-Rose, and the two accomplices in that daring deed. At one time he excited the laughter of his auditors by a recital of the freaks of the deceased Belle-Rose, or the extravagancies and credulity of Champignon; at another he caused them to shudder at the idea of the dangers he had himself encountered. But when he narrated the awful confession of François, and informed Mrs. Clayton that her late father had died by the hands of a murderer, that lady's tears burst forth in torrents, and the eyes of Eloise were also moistened with the crystal drops of sorrow. De Rosann and Mr. Clayton shared in their emotion, although not to so great a degree. The documents, which had been of such service to our hero, were then produced and read. They consisted of letters received by the Marquis de Denneville from the father of the existing Mr. Clayton, of copies of the several replies that nobleman had written, and of an epistle from the head partner of a mercantile house in Paris to the said nobleman, stating that the eight hundred thousand francs were duly handed over to him by the Marquis's servant, Gustave, and that a proper notice of the deposit had been sent, according to orders, to the firm of Messieurs Robson, Son, and Co., Threadneedle-street, London.

"Pardon me, madam," said Alfred to Mrs. Clayton, when he had concluded reading aloud the last letter, "for not having immediately given up those precious deeds, when I discovered to whom they belonged. But the idea, that they might eventually serve me in forwarding my suit with a certain person," he continued, gazing tenderly at Eloise, "and the conviction that no very long interval would ensue before I should deliver them to you, made me guilty of so unwarranted an act of audacity and boldness."

"No apology is necessary, my dear Alfred," returned Mrs. Clayton, wiping away her tears, and smiling as she was wont to do a year before at our hero. Eloise did not fail to notice his happy change in her mother's behaviour towards De Rosann; and her bosom swelled with the purest sentiments of delight and joy.

The moment the metropolis was again tranquil and quiet, Alfred mixed in the fashionable society of the Chausseé d'Antin together with his destined bride, her mother and uncle; and not one of the gay acquaintances he had known in the times of his former prosperity, and that had deserted him on the day of tribulation, failed to offer him their congratulations and address him in flattering speeches. He returned their salutations and fulsome homage to an ascendant star, with the politeness that was so characteristic of his manners; because he did not choose to let them perceive he ever felt their commiseration or disdain.

Eloise was universally admired in the fashionable circles of Paris. Happiness produces a wonderful effect upon the personal appearance of individuals, because the mind and the body are so dependent on each other, and are intimately united together. An additional bloom appeared upon the cheeks of our fair heroine—

not the rude buxom glow of country health—but the chaste vermillion dye that mingles so sweetly with the adjacent white. Her eyes flashed tenderness and delight, whenever they encountered the glance of her lover: and as those two beings trod the mazy dance together, or turned in the voluptuous waltz, the beholder might well perceive that they were a pair well adapted and fitted for each other. Indeed their dispositions, their tastes, and their beauty, so nearly corresponded, that, had not Mrs. Clayton eventually approved of their union, her cruel dissent could not have been extenuated under any plea.

Mr. Clayton was as happy as his niece and his young friend. He appeared to grow suddenly younger: and if his years did not actually diminish, his gaiety increased to a considerable amount. Eloise was now ever ready to play and sing to her kind uncle; and her talents in these divine arts were put to the test generally twice a day. De Rosann assisted in these innocent amusements, and seldom past a minute away from his beloved Eloise more than he was obliged.

Alfred did not forget his promise to Mr. Robson. He recollected with the sincerest sentiments of gratitude the paternal kindness of the worthy banker, and wrote him a long account of the revolution, the active part he had taken in it, the delivery of the documents to their legal owner, and any other circumstance which he thought would prove interesting to his London friends. He moreover added that he experienced a successful result at the hands of the arbitress of his fate in the tender *affaire de cœur*; but complained of the wedding day not yet being fixed. He concluded by desiring his kindest remembrances to the whole family, and begged Mr. Robson to charge him at any time with all commissions he might wish to be executed in Paris.

A month had nearly passed away since the glorious change that had taken place in the political affairs of France, and Mrs. Clayton had as yet said nothing concerning the period when her daughter should become De Rosann's bride. Our hero anxiously waited for Mr. Clayton to make some remark upon the interesting subject; and at length ventured to implore his interference to procure the final settlement of the happy day. The first of September was accordingly fixed upon; and the reader need scarcely be informed that it was looked forward to by the tender couple, with the impatience which true love inspires in the most chaste and immaculate minds.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CONCLUSION.

ON the first of September, De Rosann led his blooming and blushing bride to the altar. They were married at the *Mairie* of the first *Arrondissement** of Paris between the hours of three and four

* Paris is divided into twelve wards or *arrondissements*, in every one of which there is a town-hall called a *Mairie*, independent of the great Hotel de Ville.

in the afternoon, in the presence of Mrs. Clayton, her brother-in-law, the mayor, the notary, and a few friends invited to witness the performance of the ceremony. They then proceeded to the Church of Saint Hyacinth or the *Assumption*; and the nuptials were solemnly blessed by the priest in the sight of heaven.

Do not imagine, gentle reader that when the holy bands of matrimony were thus tied and consecrated by the civil and religious authorities, according to the excellent laws of France, that the happy bridegroom and his gentle bride hastened to the country to pass their honey-moon alone together. Such is not the custom of the French. They returned to the apartment occupied by the family in the Rue des Pyramides; and in the evening the whole street echoed to the sounds of music and the tread of the dancers. De Rosann and Eloise graced the magnificent ball with their presence; and at one o'clock in the morning our hero hastily threw a cloak around his bride, conducted her to a carriage, and bore her away to the dwelling he had prepared for her reception in the Rue de Castiglione.

Leblond's promise to our hero was not forgotten. When Louis Philippe was firmly established on the throne, and when amidst his numerous cares he had time to think of the individuals to whom he was indebted for his crown, as France was for her freedom, De Rosann received the Cross of the Legion of Honour, a lucrative and sinecure situation, and a permanent pension.

A year after their marriage, Eloise presented her husband with a son and heir: he was called Alfred in honour of his father. In 1833 their union was blessed with a girl, whom they named Eloise.

Mrs. Clayton died shortly subsequent to the birth of the little Alfred: and Mr. Clayton then took up his abode with his nephew and niece. Every afternoon, at about three o'clock, he may be seen taking his usual walk in the gardens of the Tuileries. In the evening he visits the Opera or the Porte St. Martin, dividing his time and his attention between the music of Rossini or Meyerbeer, and the prose of Pixericourt or Alexander Dumas. He is always the first to purchase the last new novel of Paul de Kock, De Balzac or Georges Sand; and is a constant subscriber to the *Constitutionnel* and the *Gazette des Tribunaux*. He has entirely lost his English tastes and manners, and has imbibed every thing that is French. Even his very hat has a conical shape verging towards a peak, and is curiously curled at the brim. He has only retained his English prejudices.

Champignon accidentally heard of our hero's happy marriage and establishment in Paris, and wrote him a complimentary letter on the occasion. The epistle concluded with a request that De Rosann would interest the government in the gastronomer's favour, and procure him a full pardon: "for," said Champignon in his own language, "I flutter like a fowl when a Gendarme passes by my door, or enters my shop to purchase a *cervelas sans ail*." De Rosann readily complied with the wishes "of the best cook in Europe," and succeeded in his demand for the indulgence thus pathetically solicited. Champignon was so overjoyed at the event

of his supplication, that he gave an immense *paté de foi gras* to the postman who brought him the welcome despatch, and regaled the respectable functionary with such frequent libations of maraschino, that the letters, instead of being distributed to their different addresses, were carefully consigned to the gutter, where their guardian himself lay down—doubtless for the purpose of protecting them.

No sooner had Champignon received his pardon, than he dropped the name of Citron as unworthy of him, and re-assumed his own. But fearful that this sudden change might appear singular to his customers, he caused upwards of ten thousand circulars to be printed and spread over the town of St. Malo, to inform the public that particular reasons, which he could not immediately explain, obliged him to vary his nomenclature. He still continues his lucrative trade, ceases to deplore the fall of the Cadran Rouge, and rides out into the country every morning on his donkey to purchase the fowls that have died in the night, or that have been killed by the wanton mischief of vagabond boys.

Louis Dorval built a neat dwelling on the site of his ruined mansion, and found a good customer for his poultry and eggs in Champignon. His wife recovered from the sick bed on which she was lying when we first made mention of her; and although neither she nor her husband be important characters in our history, we love to assure the reader of their prosperity and happiness.

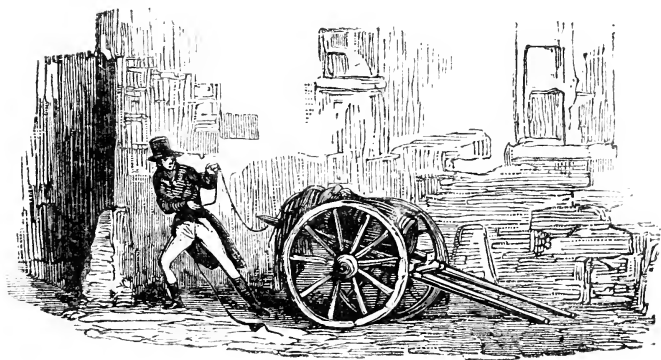
And what of Selina Robson? She has not again seen the object of her ill-fated attachment—but she hears of him often—and never mentions his name without a sigh. Her grief has moderated into a settled melancholy;—she seldom enters into society, or joins in any party of pleasure. She is not absolutely wretched: but her countenance has not the expression of gaiety that once animated it. Several eligible offers have been made to her; and she has declined them all. Her heart is deeply wounded—it is not however broken: the scar has healed—the mark still remains, and still gives pain. Music draws tears from her eyes—a romance makes her weep like a child. She has notwithstanding become excessively fond of reading gloomy tales; for she finds in the history of disappointed passion those associations of sympathising ideas that console as they grieve, and that teach her how all mankind are more or less subject to misfortune while they excite her most sensitive feelings.

With regard to Markham one word will suffice: he finished his career a miserable exile at Botany Bay.

The reader will probably recollect the little girl who sang Orlando's song, in the streets of St. Malo. That songstress was Jeannette. Her old grandmother died only a few days after Belle-Rose and De Rosann honoured her cottage with their presence; and Claude—the Draconic peasant whose ideas of justice we e so rigorously severe—left the miserable hut with his interesting daughter, and allured her to turn her musical talents to advantage. She succeeded to the utmost of her own and her father's wishes, and soon became celebrated at St. Malo as the "*jolie chanteuse*" of national airs. Her reputation followed her to Paris, whither she accompanied her sire to try their fortune in the metropolitan city—the

centre of all that is polite, learned, luxurious, and dissipated. In the *cafés* and at the *tables d'hôte* of the various hotels, Jeannette speedily procured for herself a hearty welcome by the melody of her voice and her blameless character; and not long after the birth of his second child, our hero recognised the songstress in the Café de Paris, where he happened to be dining with a party of friends.

What more have we to relate? France appreciates the blessings of peace, of national freedom, of just laws, and of a virtuous monarch. She no longer sighs for empty glories and vain honours. She has united her hand to that of England—the two puissant sovereigns have allied their respective forces—and nought but the most beneficial results can ensue. Let us therefore hope for a permanent establishment of those bounties which peace and tranquillity shed around; and let us not wish to see the bloody standards of war again raised amongst civilized and enlightened nations.



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